

PHILMAY'S ILLUSTRATED WINTER ANNUAL

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P

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

No. 1.

2

CONTRIBUTORS.

SARAH GRAND.

(Should Irascible Old Gentlemen be Taught to Knit?)

E. F. BENSON.

(Creed of Manners.)

GRANT ALLEN.

(Nemesis Wins.)

MORLEY ROBERTS.

(Like a Man.)

W. H. DEVENISH

(A Parliamentary Ghost.)

R. H. SHERARD.

(Bohemian Life in Paris.)

KENNETH GRAHAME.

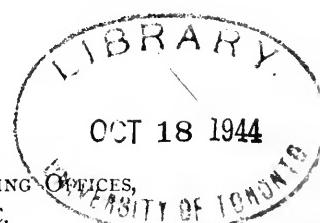
(The Blue Room.)

AND OTHER WRITERS.

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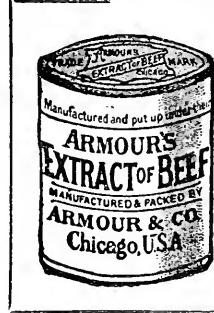
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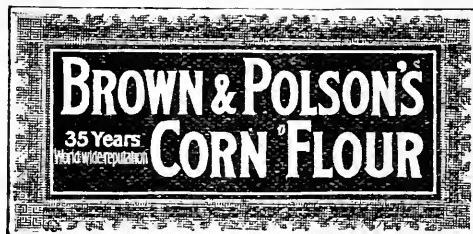
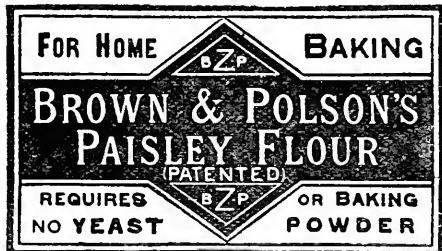
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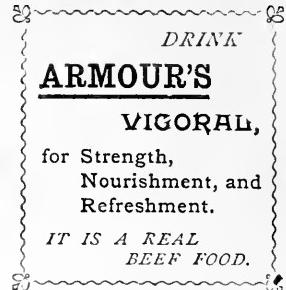
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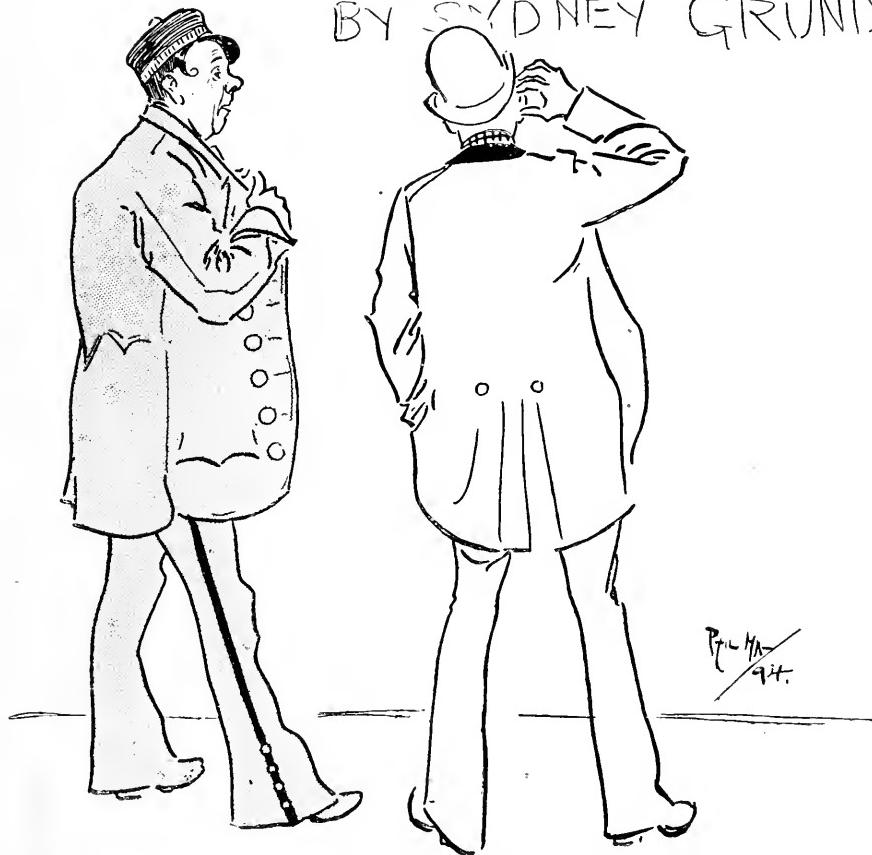
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BY SYDNEY GRUNDY



A CHANCE FOR THE NEW WOMAN.

FIRST COSTER : "D'year, Bill, wot's awl this abaat the noo woman? Wot is she?"

SECOND COSTER : "I dunno, but I wishes I cud come acrost one. I'm abaat sick o' my old woman, I am."



SHE : "Yes, I always keep my birthday presents."

HE : "What a collection you must have!"



T. H. M.
1916

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"*(hic)* Can't help you, ole f'la, but I'll sit down with you *(hic)*."



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SNOOKS (rather flattered) : "We—er—yes, my name."

S.-L. I. : "Oh well, I've got a writ for you."

SHOULD IRASCIBLE
OLD GENTLEMEN
BE TAUGHT TO
KNIT ?

BY
SARAH
GRAND



THE possible good effects of knitting on the future progress of civilization is a question which has never yet been considered with sufficient earnestness and attention. Few people

have any conception of the advantage of teaching irascible old gentlemen how to knit. In fact, had it not been for me, I doubt if this generation would ever have learnt to what an extent the happiness

of families and the peace of nations depends upon the success of a school which I have established for this purpose. I need hardly point out the crying necessity there has always been for such an establishment, a necessity which has existed since the days of the first irascible old gentleman who threw bones about, lived in a cave, ate underdone babes, and growled when anybody approached. He was the terror of his time, but fortunately he lived in a scattered neighbourhood, and could, besides, be despatched at any moment to another sphere, enlightened public opinion at that time being all in favour of performing the effectual operation on the head which converts a spoiled specimen of gross material human nature into a perfect angel in a moment. Personally I am far from being convinced that the old-fashioned remedy was not the best, because of the immediate relief it gave both to the impatient and his suffering friends. Just a little knock on the head, and he had gone where the shoe never pinches, dinner is digestible, and there are no tempers to be crossed. What could be more thorough, simple, and beautiful? However, piously as all truly philanthropic persons must have yearned to perform this good action at times, it is impossible, because in a benighted age a hampering injunction was laid on society which has had such an effect on public opinion as to make it more expedient to let the impatient continue in misery than to improve his plight, as one would naturally and might so easily do. But, had it been the invariable custom to promote irascible old gentlemen to be angels the moment their trouble set in, one cannot help thinking of all the agonies men might have saved themselves! Just glance at the long roll—Moses, Mahomet, Cyril of Alexandria, Torquimada, Calvin, Zwingle, and the whole notorious army of devil worshippers, from he who first sang, "Slay and spare not, in the name of the Lord!" to the last man whose ear is inclined to harken complacently to every threat of eternal damnation aimed at a fellow-creature: they were all irascible men; and what did any of them do for the world in comparison to the misery they made in it?

Many a weary day did I mourn over the mis-

taken policy which deprives irascible old gentlemen of instantaneous promotion to another realm, however richly they may deserve it; but finally there flashed into my mind a hope—a possibility that there might be yet another cure. Many of the greatest discoveries were made by accident, and so also was this, the discovery of the value of knitting as an antidote to an irascible disposition. It was not, perhaps, wholly to accident that I owed a grandfather of this description. Accident may have made him my grandfather; but it was overeating that made him irascible. He ate on continuously at everything which he ought not to have touched, and so kept himself in such a state of fermentation that it was impossible to approach him without provoking an explosion. The dear old gentleman was a positive pest to his family. Everything that any of us wanted to do was just the very thing he would not allow. "I won't hear of it, by Jove! What do you take me for?" was the formula; and then, if a book were handy, he would throw it at us, or if there were no missile he would hurl epithets. In any case he would hurl epithets, which really answered his purpose best, because they not only hit hard but stayed rankling until they set up festering sores. I fared worst in the family, because he had chosen me to be his heir, and was determined to make me suffer for it. He has often kept me sitting beside him by the hour together, writhing under his epithets, but able to endure them so long as I could work off the irritation they caused me into my knitting. It was long, however, before it dawned upon me that if the knitting had such a salutary effect upon my nerves, it might also be good for my grandfather. But how to get him to try it? This was where the accident came in. I had despaired of ever finding an opportunity even to broach the subject; but one day the dear old man himself quite unexpectedly made one for me. It was lovely weather, and I had wanted to go for a ride, so he kept me in the whole afternoon to sit with him. In fact, I believe he stayed in himself for the purpose, and this made my knitting especially necessary as a sedative. I was making a woollen shawl with big wooden needles that



Menegash

clicked as I worked, and during a long silence the sound became obtrusive even to myself, so that I was not surprised when at last he exclaimed : "Stop that confounded row !"

"Do you find it exasperating ?" I answered with inspiration, continuing to knit.

"Dammably !" he growled from his lowest depths.

"How you must wish you could do it !" I said pleasantly. He scowled at me, but there was reflection under the frown. "Not that you could," I continued. "It takes a clever man to knit a shawl."

"Why—confound you !" he exclaimed ; "do you mean to tell me I couldn't do any woman's work I chose ?"

"You couldn't knit," I maintained defiantly.

"Phoo ! " he ejaculated, then wriggled a little on his chair, watching me the while. "Here !" he called at last. "Just let me show you. How do you hold the confounded things ?"

I went to him, expecting to have my head snapped off, adjusted the needles in his gouty fingers, and defied him to do it. This sufficed to set him to work with a will.

During the first half-hour he swore a good deal. Then, as he became less awkward, he began to triumph in the prospect of having "I told you so !" to hurl at me, and his countenance relaxed. "There !" he exclaimed at last, having done a whole row by himself, "who said I couldn't knit ?"

"I don't call that knitting," I retorted. "And, besides, I said you couldn't knit a shawl."

He compressed his lips, and I assure you that noble old man set to work out of sheer opposition, mingled with a desire to click needles at us all as a new form of exasperation, and never rested until he had knitted one. But by that time he had come under the spell of the occupation. He certainly said, "I told you so !" when he had done ; but then he added, "My dear !"

I was so surprised, I could not speak.

The next day I began a new piece of knitting while sitting beside him, and caught him once or twice watching me with interest.

"Wouldn't you like to go out, my dear ?" he said

at last. "Have a ride. A good gallop, you know, will freshen you."

"Oh, but—you will be all alone," I exclaimed, scarcely able to believe my ears, so altered was his tone.

"Oh, never mind me," he answered, speaking more like a gentleman than I had ever yet heard him. "I can amuse myself—somehow."

I rose, and was taking my work away with me.

"Leave it," he said peremptorily. "Here—put it down here beside me."

I had no sooner done so than he took it up with a fine affectation of absent-mindedness, which did not, however, conceal his inward satisfaction.

When I returned from my ride, my knitting was apparently lying as I had left it, but I noticed that rows and rows had been added to it, and my grandfather was so complacent for the rest of the evening that, try as he would to be natural, he once or twice so far forgot himself as to say civil things to me.

The next day he again manoeuvred so as to be left alone with my knitting, and very soon it became evident that the gentle occupation was having a benign effect on his disposition. As he only pursued it in secret, however, much of the good it might have been doing him was lost ; and I was casting about in my mind for some means of daring him to knit openly, when Professor Grim, another highly irascible old man, came to stay with him. My grandfather had been bad enough before he learnt to knit, but Professor Grim was worse. In every way, I think he was the most objectionable old man I ever met. Even my grandfather, under the refining influence of his last hour's surreptitious knitting, confided to me quite amicably that he dreaded his coming.

"Let's teach him to knit," slipped from me unawares.

Then my heart stood still, for I feared I had spoilt everything ; but to my intense relief my grandfather actually smiled ; and what it is when the domestic tyrant fairly smiles, those who do know need not be told, and those who do not cannot imagine.

"I'd like to see you teach him !" he said.



"Oh, I couldn't, of course," I answered, diplomatically. "But I dare say *you* might."

He grumped at this, but I could see that he was not ill-pleased, and the first time he and I and Professor Grim were alone together, he began, "I say, do you know what that puss"—meaning me—"had the impudence to swear I couldn't do?"

"Eh? What?" snapped Professor Grim.

"She said I couldn't knit!"

"Well, and could you?"

"Could I!" my grandfather echoed irascibly. "Of course I could. Here—just let me show the—eh—Professor." I handed him my knitting, and as he adjusted the needles he observed, "I flatter myself I can do more by a long chalk than you give me credit for—more than you can too, for I bet anything you couldn't knit."

"Couldn't I if I tried!" the other old man retorted in a tone of extreme exasperation.

"I should just like to see you!" my grandfather said sarcastically, and then started to work, dropping stitches all the way along under the pretence of being able to do it without looking at it.

"I am quite sure Professor Grim could knit as well as you can if he chose," I ventured demurely.

"Of course I could," said the Professor.

"Here, let him try," my grandfather cried, holding the knitting out to him.

"Oh, no, that's not fair," I interposed; "he must have all the advantages that you have had—a new piece of work, and me to teach him."

"Well, with all that, I bet a pair of socks of my own knitting he'll not succeed in learning," my grandfather asserted.

"Done with you for a hundred pounds," said the Professor with determination.

I got needles and wool, and began at once to teach him, holding his nobbly old knuckles in position as one does with a child. He liked his lesson very much, and said something quite poetical about my hands in an undertone which my grandfather did not hear. He really made wonderful progress too, and was altogether an apter pupil than my grandfather had been. The latter soon began to assert, in an aggrieved tone, that it was evident he was going to lose his bet, and he had better begin those confounded socks; but I could see that he was overjoyed because the bet gave him a fine sporting excuse to knit as much as he liked. Very soon the two settled to work together day after day as a matter of course, and it was delightful to see them, peering over their spectacles, their white moustaches bristling with smiles, their conversation good humoured, and their whole attitude kindly and considerate.

These two formed the nucleus of my school, the decoys who served to lure numbers of other irascible old gentlemen to the saving of their souls and the great relief of their families.

My pupils are out in the garden now, either sitting together sociably in groups or in happy solitude, each occupied with his own pet piece of knitting, and all looking so benign that my heart goes out to them; and when I compare what they were with what they are, I feel bound to maintain that all irascible old gentlemen should be taught to knit. Families afflicted with one cannot do better than send him to me.



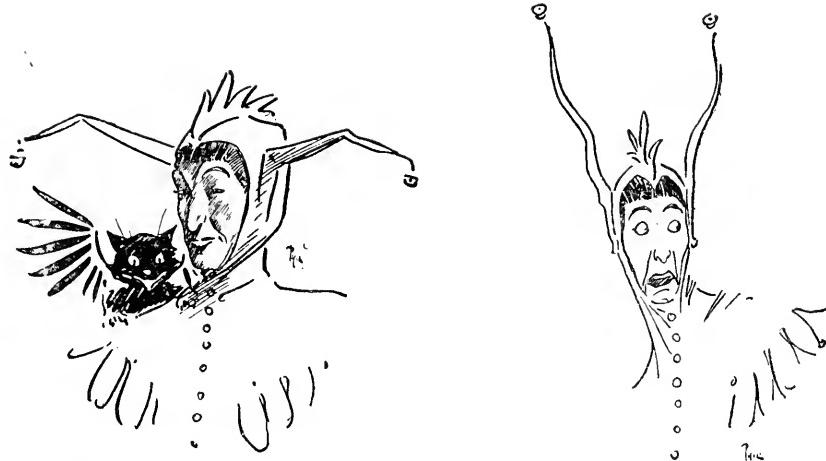


THE NEW WOMAN.

MISS SNOOKS to MISS BROWN (the fat one with the light moustache): "Oh, I say, old chap, how do you make it grow? What do you use for it?"



"Ow, I si, mister, my mother wears one of them things on 'er heye."



"Champagne, Mum?"



THE COLONEL: "So poor old Mike has committed suicide, has he? Well, I should have thought that would have been the *last* thing he'd have done."

TENANT: "Which it were, sor."



SHE (romantic) : "Will thee meet me in th' gloaming, John?"
HE : "Wheere's that?"



SHE: "If we were to meet a bull, dear, what would you do?"

HE: "What a question to ask! Don't you know I was champion long-distance runner at school?"



OVERHEARD AT THE LORD MAYOR'S BALL.

"Oh, George, I hope you are not going to take me to supper ; I've had three already."



THE M^{AN}.

HONEYMOONING.

HE : "If I'd known that tunnel was so long, I'd have kissed you."

SHE : "Didn't you?"

A CREED OF MANNERS.

BY E. F. BENSON.

THE long hours of English midsummer twilight were rapidly fading into night, and the dark was descending over the landscape layer on layer. In the garden-beds the scarlet geraniums already looked black, and the trees stood out in delicate tracery of leaf and branch against the velvet blue of a clear sky. The garden itself sloped gently up in a stretch of bird-haunted lawn from the river bank to a broad gravel walk in front of the house, and from the dining-room windows, which were thrown open to admit the cool night air, came shafts of oblong yellow light, through which soft, clumsy moths passed and repassed as across a magic-lantern sheet, losing themselves again in the fragrant dusk.

Inside two young men were sitting at the table, and one of them had just drawn a cigarette case from his coat pocket.

"I think we had better go outside and smoke," he said, "and tell them to bring the coffee out there. It's deliciously warm. What do you say, Claude?"

The younger of the two got up and strolled to the window.

"Yes, let's go out; and then you can go on trying to convince me that I have a soul, and I can begin convincing you that I have not. Not that any one ever convinced anybody. That is why it is so delightful to argue. All argument is perfectly useless, and thus partakes of the nature of art."

Jack Anstruther rose too.

"How very Oscaresque," he said.

"To-night you have adventitious advantage," continued Claude. "Midsummer evenings by the Thames always seem to me to lend a superficial probability to the existence of souls. If we had stopped in London and gone to Lady Mildred's

dance, you would never have given a thought to your own soul, much less to mine."

"My aunt resolves everything into digestion, I know," said Jack. "She told me the other day that once when she was a girl she fell violently in love. 'But, my dear Jack,' she went on, 'it was all stomach!'"

"The converse holds too," said Claude. "I ate some lobster the other day, and it gave me, not indigestion, but acute remorse."

"Remorse? What for?"

"I forget. It is immaterial. Remorse will hang itself on any peg."

"But in your case it doesn't get many pegs to hang on, does it?"

The other laughed, and strolled towards the door. "No; I am let unfurnished, and without fittings," he said. "Come on, Jack."

Claude Ackersley was one of those almost perfectly happy young men, who have been blessed by Nature with an unlimited capacity for enjoying themselves; and as this gift was wedded in him to an insatiable appetite for loafing, his time was very fully taken up. The loafer, like the poet, is born, not made; and out of a hundred men who loaf, very few are loafers. Most men who loaf only do so because they find it less tedious than any other occupation; the real loafer loafes because he loves it. In other respects Claude was rich, good-looking, well-born, perfectly healthy, entirely unambitious, and twenty-five years old. Jack Anstruther had been questioning him at dinner as to what he meant to do, and why, and when, and this led on to more metaphysical matters. Jack, who was some years the elder, was a rising barrister with a large practice, and the two had come down to a little house he owned on the Thames near

Henley, to spend a Saturday till Monday. Originally there was to have been a small party with him, but the thing had fallen through. Claude had been somewhat at a loss to know what they would do with themselves alone, but Jack evidently wanted to come, and as the other had never been possessed of sufficient strength of mind to refuse anybody anything, he went too.

They settled themselves in basket chairs on the terrace, and for a few moments neither of them spoke. A nightingale sang loud in the trees, and our Lady of Summer Nights walked through her lands with hushed footsteps.

"I can't think why you should be so anxious that I should ever do anything," began Claude at last. "You see, I have no sordid motives which necessitate my choosing some profession. A merciful Providence has spared me that."

"There are other reasons for having a profession besides making money," said Jack.

Claude opened his eyes wide.

"My dear fellow," he said, "you are stating dogmatically as proved the very point we have been arguing. If there is any reason besides that of making money, it would be some sense of moral responsibility, the idea that one can and ought to do some good. I couldn't possibly do any good. I am a harmless, unnecessary young man; I lay claim to that, but to nothing more."

"Do you really mean you have no aims or hopes or fears, that you regard yourself as wholly irresponsible with reference to others?"

Claude sat still a moment without replying.

"Irresponsible? Yes," he said at length. "But I have a hope and an aim, and a fear for that matter, though they are all one. My hope and aim are that under every circumstance, however trying, I may behave like a gentleman. My fear is that circumstances may be too strong, and that I shall fail, and behave like a coward or a cad. We differ altogether, you see. Your motto is, 'Morals maketh man,' mine, that 'Manners maketh man' — I was at Winchester. Perhaps morals do make women—you may be right there; and that no doubt is why all women are absolutely incomprehensible."

"Why do you say those things, Claude?" asked Jack. "Sometimes I really do believe that you put manners and morals on the same plane, and of course that is absurd when a case in point arises."

"Of course I don't put them on the same plane. I put manners on the only plane, and everything else nowhere. But what do you mean by 'when a case in point arises'?"

"When you are confronted with a right and a wrong, of course all else must give way to that."

Claude sat up in his chair, clasping his knees with his hands.

"I am telling you sober truth," he said. "Nothing seems to me worth taking any trouble about except behaving nicely. You talk of right and wrong deciding your actions; I talk of good form and bad form directing mine. My whole being revolts against bad form, but I am sorry to say I don't feel any such revulsion against doing things which I suppose are wrong. I am perfectly serious. Think how totally impossible life would be unless we took some trouble to behave decently. The whole duty of man is to be pleasant, and social, and charming. Nothing else matters. Hear me swear!"

Claude turned round and looked at Jack. When a loafer is serious, he is very serious.

"It is so," he said, nodding his head.

"You can't really think that," said Jack. "You enjoy taking the lowest view of yourself."

"Not in the least. I have no instinctive sense of right and wrong, but I have a very strong instinctive sense that if this world is to go on, we must do our best to make it pleasant. A man's first duty is to make himself as presentable as possible, and his next to make himself as adaptable and well-mannered as he can. A good horse is a horse with good manners, who will behave nicely in a crowd; and so it is with a good man. So, to return to our point, I still fail to see why I should have a profession."

"Still, a profession need not be bad for your manners," said Jack.

"That is true, but it cannot possibly be good for them; and if so, why should I have one?"

"And is that all your creed?" he asked.

"No. There is a little more. I enjoy life, as I live it, enormously, quite enormously. It is my bird in the hand. Other people—you, for example—assure me there is a much better bird, or perhaps two, in the bush, which you call your aim in life. Personally I cannot see that bird in the bush—you all confess it is a very thick bush—nor can I hear it sing. All that comes out of the bush is a very desolate, croaking sound, most lugubrious to hear. I really cannot believe that the bird is there. So it would clearly be absurd for me to sacrifice the bird I hold in my hand for one that I don't believe is in the bush?"

"Then you really mean that your physical nature is your only criterion, that you care for nothing with your soul, or, if that word offends you, with anything that is not your body."

"I have no reason to suppose the contrary," said Claude. "Of course I don't love all beautiful people and hate all ugly ones, because some ugly people have got an attractiveness about them which a very beautiful woman may lack; but as a rule I love beauty and I am indifferent to anything else. And the attractiveness of those other people is purely physical too. Of course I am right! How can you love a person's soul? When one falls in love it is the physical contrast which one desires. The touch of one woman's hand is more to me than all the world."

"Oh, I admit that," said Jack; "but don't you know what Plato says, about the bodily sensation being only a sort of copy from the archetype, the soul?"

Claude shook his head.

"My dear Jack, you make that fatal mistake of getting information second-hand. If you wanted to see what an elephant was like, you would look it out in the encyclopædia, instead of going to the Zoo. The only thing that matters to me is what I think about love, not what Plato thinks about it. Isn't it Plato who proves conclusively and in charming language that pain is not an evil? I was quite convinced by it until I had to go to the dentist. And the dentist convinced me that pain is the only evil in existence. And as his demon-

stration was practical, it was necessarily more final to me than Plato's, which is only theoretical."

Jack laughed.

"I wish you would be serious for two minutes."

"I was never more serious in my life. As a matter of experience again, I don't like people because they are good, or dislike them because they are bad; and to me that seems about a proof that if I have a soul at all, it must be a very indifferent one, not worth cultivating, in fact. Of course if I liked all good people and disliked all bad ones, it would be a very strong argument in favour of my having a soul, but failing the one, I fail the other. No, my hope and my aim are sufficient for me."

Claude threw away the stump of his cigarette, got up out of his chair, and stretched himself slowly and luxuriously.

"Let's go down to the river," he said; "I never saw such a delicious night. You really were quite right, it is much better being here than in a stuffy ball-room. I wish my mother was in England; she loves an English June. However, she comes next week; she leaves Brindisi to-night."

Claude thrust his hand through Jack's arm, and they walked down over the close-shaven lawn to the water's edge. A great tawny moon had just risen over the fields, which were fragrant and tall with dusky hay, and cast an uncertain trembling track across the stream. The night was perfectly cloudless; a fish rose once and again in midstream, and a little breeze wandered shiftily down the river.

"What was that charming little poem you showed me the other day," he continued: "'This kind, warm world is all I know?' That is so good, I felt I could have written it myself; which, after all, is the highest compliment one can pay to the productions of any one else. And people like me, who know only this kind, warm world, enjoy it, I believe, most of all. It must be so distracting to believe in anything else."

They stood for several minutes by the river bank, and then Claude shivered slightly.

"This kind, warm world is just a trifle chilly down here," he said. "Let's go in again; it is getting late, and I want whisky and soda."

They went indoors, and a man brought them glasses and bottles. Claude managed to break the neck of his soda, and spilt about half of it on to the floor. However, he poured the rest into the glass, and drank it off at a gulp.

As he drained the glass he suddenly started.

"How very odd," he said. "Jack, did you put any ice into my whisky?"

Jacck looked up.

"Ice? No."

Claude held the tumbler up to the light. There were two or three small fragments of glass at the bottom of it.

"I've done an extraordinarily stupid thing," he said. "I've swallowed a chunk of glass. Is it very indigestible?"

Jack jumped out of his chair.

"Swallowed a piece of glass?" he asked. "Claude, are you sure?"

"Well, it was something hard, and it wasn't ice, and there is some more of it in the tumbler. But don't look like the Tragic Muse. What shall I do? Glass cannot be very wholesome."

Jack looked at his watch.

"We can catch the last train back," he said. "You must come up to London to-night."

"And see a doctor?"

"Yes, of course. I knew a man—Oh, my God!"

Claude got up too.

"Is it as bad as that?" he asked. "Yes, I suppose it might play the deuce with one's inside. But you needn't come. It would be absurd for you to come too."

"Nonsense. I couldn't possibly stop here."

Claude turned to the window and looked out. The basket chairs where they had been sitting a quarter of an hour before had been moved in, and the moon had risen a little higher. Otherwise everything was pitilessly unchanged. For a moment he felt angry and horribly helpless. Why should a splinter from a soda-water bottle, a wretched accident of this kind, be allowed to enter into the issues of life and death?

Jack touched him on the shoulder.

"Come, Claude; we mustn't miss the train."

"No, I'm ready. But isn't it odd we should have been talking about these things just before this happened? Tell me what you were going to say just now—that man you knew?"

"I can't talk of it. Come."

* * * * *

Four days later Claude lay dying. They had gone at once to a great London doctor, who had told him there was nothing to be done. If he died, he died quickly but terribly; if he lived, he lived. And he lay dying.

They had given him as much morphia as they dared, but there were intervals in which he was conscious. He could not bear the weight of the bedclothes or of the useless poultices, and on the third morning he lay just covered with a sheet. Under the influence of the drugs he had gone off into a disturbed sleep about four that morning, and when Jack came back at eight he was still sleeping. But soon after he began to fidget and grow restless, and when the doctor came he was awake.

The pain was almost insupportable, and his face was growing very white and worn; and when the doctor saw him, he looked up at Jack who was standing on the other side of the bed, and shook his head.

Jack understood at once, and without hesitation knelt down at Claude's side.

"Claude, old boy," he said, "it is nearly over; you will not be in pain much longer. Is there anything you want done?"

Claude smiled, and even in the midst of his rending pain was his old courteous self.

"Thanks, Jack, there is one thing. Ah—!"

His face contracted with a fresh spasm of pain.

"One thing," he continued. "My mother will be less wretched if she hears there has been a—clergyman with me. Send for Lawson, will you? He's a good fellow. Can't they send me to sleep again?"

Jack looked at the doctor. Yes, the end was near and inevitable. Why let him suffer more than necessary. He gave him another dose of morphia, and saying he would be back in half an hour, left the two together.

The morphia soon began to take effect, and Claude dozed off again. The nurse moved noiselessly about the room, arranging things for the day, and once she stopped near the bed, and looked at Claude as he lay there.

"He is dying very hard," she whispered to Jack, "but he never said a harsh or impatient word to me; and he always thanked me whenever I did anything for him. I never saw a man so patient and gentle. Poor boy, poor boy!"

The sun cast a square of hot golden light on to the floor where Claude's dachshund Flo was enjoying her morning doze, and, finding it unpleasantly warm, she waddled pathetically off into the shade again. Jack found himself noticing that she had chosen the wrong side, and that she would certainly have to move again before an hour was up. Flo

hated the sun as much as any woman who was inclined to freckle.

Lawson soon came, and he and Jack waited together, and at the end of half an hour the doctor returned. Claude was already getting fidgety in his sleep, and before long he opened his eyes.

"I think this is the end, is it not?" he asked. Again a spasm of pain seized him.

"Ah, my God!" he began.

He turned in bed slightly and saw Lawson.

"A thousand pardons," he said. "Doctor Smartly—I don't think—do you know Mr. Lawson?"

And before the hot yellow square of light had travelled across the floor to where Flo lay his hope and his aim were realized.





"If everybody got 'is deserts, where would *you* be?"
"Walkin' alone, o' course."



GIDDY.

"Hang it all ; let's be gay. Come and find the phonograph."



Magazine

THE POSSESSIONS.

A PARLIAMENTARY GHOST.

By W. H. DEVENISH.

THERE seemed to be no doubt on the point. Mr. McFadden really was dead. An evening paper first made the sad event known to the world by announcing the unexpected decease of the well-known member for Swillborough. No one attached much importance to the authority of the halfpenny journal, because a large percentage of its news was habitually evolved out of the inner consciousness of its talented sub-editor. But in this case, by mistake, the *Evening Twinkler* seemed to be quite accurate, for the morning papers followed suit, and some of them even published a brief biography of the deceased.

In the House of Commons the event caused more discussion than in the country at large, for Mr. McFadden was one of those gentlemen who have a large circle of friends, and a still larger circle of acquaintances ; and thus his departure from the scenes in which he had been so familiar a figure produced a greater void than would have been caused by the loss of many more eminent men. For an eminent man McFadden certainly was not, though a pleasant, jolly-looking figure enough with his white hair and red, convivial countenance.

In particular, the London letters of the chief provincial papers were full of anecdotes about him —some complimentary, some perhaps the reverse, but all tending to show him in the light of a good-natured, cheerful humorist. One chatty scribe explained, with much internal chuckling and many roguish innuendos, how Mr. McFadden would send to newly-elected members bogus notes from the Speaker, inviting them to take part in the debate. Of course, the poor victims, when they rose in their places, trembling with anxiety, and with their hats full of MSS., never caught the Speaker's eye, and complained bitterly that they had been slighted

by that high official. Another paragraph described how Mr. McFadden had been accused by a political opponent of being the worse for liquor, and had cheerfully replied,—

"That may be. Very likely I am drunk to-night, but I shall be sober to-morrow. Your disease, on the contrary, is incurable, for you are a fool to-night, and will be a fool to-morrow."

It cannot be said that the witticisms reported were either very refined or showed much intelligence, but they were such as would be keenly appreciated either at a farmers' ordinary or at a meeting of commercial travellers. The London correspondents really did their best for their deceased benefactor. Mr. McFadden had been to them quite a little gold mine, for it was his practice to spend all the day collecting bits of gossip, which he would dispense freely to any one who chose to talk with him as he grew mellow towards the evening. The result was that a moment's chat with him meant for the eager journalists of the inner lobby at least a three-and-sixpenny, if not a five-shilling, paragraph.

It must be admitted that this habitual tendency towards inebriety as the evening wore on was not much to the credit of a legislator ; but Mr. McFadden always declared that he was the victim of circumstances, having been forced into indulgence in strong liquors against his will and his natural tastes. In proof of this assertion he brought forward the fact that he had once voted for Sunday Closing. His explanation of his weakness was a simple one. He said that he represented a constituency of hard drinkers, who took a great interest in the proceedings of the House of Commons. He was therefore called out every five minutes by some constituent or other who

wanted either to get a ticket for the Strangers' Gallery, or to be taken over the House, or to sit out on the terrace. As McFadden stood every visitor a drink, and also drank with them to show good fellowship, he had naturally to get through a considerable number of brandies and sodas in the course of the day. In fact, only long training and a hard head enabled him to last out his numerous and thirsty supporters. It must not be supposed that Mr. McFadden became intoxicated or misconducted himself owing to the trials to which he was subjected. It is true that he grew noisy after dinner, that he told somewhat pointless jokes, and laughed very loudly at them himself, that he moved about with a free, rolling gait, and greeted every one with effusive affection ; but, still, even the strictest policeman, if he had met him in the streets of London, would have been willing to swear that, though he had been drinking, he was not drunk.

It appeared that his death had taken place very unexpectedly at Boulogne, from failure of the heart's action ; and there he was buried three days afterwards in the English cemetery, his funeral being, as the daily papers stated, quite a private one, attended only by two or three relations. Members on both sides of the House lamented his loss in the usual conventional terms.

"Poor old McFadden ! Who would have thought he would have gone so soon ? Why, it is only three weeks ago that I saw him with a constituent at the bar here."

But in a week's time some new topic attracted their attention, and his name was heard no more in their midst ; in a fortnight he had been completely forgotten, except by his faithful constituents at Swillborough, who would no longer enjoy free drinks whenever they happened to be in the neighbourhood of Westminster. It so happened, however, that the Speaker had not received official intelligence of the late member's death, and therefore he was officially ignorant of news that was the common possession of the whole world.

As the result of this state of things, the leader of the late member's party had not yet applied for a new writ, and Swillborough was still nominally represented by James Gustavus McFadden,

"manufacturer of bone manure, and privately educated," to quote from his biography in a popular Guide to Parliament.

Exactly a fortnight from the day of McFadden's death the House was engaged on a dreary Bill, which proposed to provide deserving paupers with tobacco out of the rates. The author had introduced many safeguards to prevent this privilege being abused. Thus, the tobacco was to be smoked, and not chewed ; it was for men, not women ; its quality was defined, and its quantity limited. As a result no member took the slightest interest in the discussion, with the exception of half a dozen tobacco manufacturers, who were engaged in proving that they alone supplied the article which was required, and that all other tobacco was either deleterious or too expensive. The dinner-hour had arrived, and the House was occupied by some five members. There was the unfortunate Minister in charge of the Bill, who lay back yawning on the Treasury Bench ; three members of his party, who were told off to applaud him and keep him in countenance ; an obstinate Scotchman, who was convinced that unless every clause was amended some grievance would be inflicted on his nation ; and a Parnellite, who had fallen asleep in a comfortable corner. The Speaker sat in his chair with his head resting on his chest, one leg crossed over the other, and the ends of his wig hanging down over his shoulders, dozing in a well-assumed attitude of vigilance, whilst the Scotchman quoted unintelligible technicalities about Scotch Local Government, which only a Scotchman could understand, and in which he even would take but little interest. As the orator prosed on, partly for the purpose of filling up time, partly to air his own fads, a slight disturbance could be heard from the inner lobby, and the glass doors of the House swung suddenly open.

The Scotchman did not at first take the trouble to look round, but his remarks were cut short by a sudden change which came over the Speaker. That dignified official, from some reason or other, was in a state of great agitation ; his naturally pale face had turned a livid white ; he had half risen to his feet, and was clutching the arms of his

chair in his excitement. The Scotchman stared at the Speaker, thinking at first that he had been taken suddenly ill, but he saw that the well-known Speaker's eye was fixed on some object in the distance. Expecting to be called to order after the usual form, he looked round, and, as he did so, the flood of his oratory was dried up. He paused with open mouth, and his MSS. notes one by one fluttered down on to the floor, slipping from his trembling hand. For there, standing in the doorway, was the figure of Mr. McFadden.

There could be no mistake about it and no delusion. The broad red face, the white hair and beard, the Falstaffian figure, and the expression of half-t tipsy gravity were sufficient at once to identify the form as that of the deceased member. Even the very peculiarities of his clothing had been reproduced ; the figure was wearing the well-known curly-brimmed hat very much on one side ; the white waistcoat, and the large check trousers. Not only that, but last and most complete piece of evidence—the figure had undoubtedly dined freely ; a pleasant sort of smile played about its lips, and it rolled as it walked with a certain unsteadiness born of the third bottle of Perrier Jouet. With perfect respectfulness the dead politician bowed to the chair, and then tacked up the gangway to take his place in his well-known corner seat, three rows behind the front Opposition bench. His advance, however, was too much for the nerves of the other occupants of the House. The Speaker, gathering his robes, scuttled hastily away through the private entrance behind the chair ; the clerks quickly followed him, and even the Sergeant-at-Arms so far lost his presence of mind as to leave unprotected and exposed the sacred Mace itself.

The Press Gallery was empty, but the Strangers' Gallery was nearly full, and those in it were left staring in surprise at the sudden clearance of the House without any notice or formal adjournment. Even the ghost itself seemed somewhat taken aback, for it smiled vaguely, and shaking one hand in the air muttered indistinctly, "Mosh incomprehensible, I'shure you. Mosh incomprehensible, I'shure you." Meantime, the news was spreading through the Strangers' Gallery, for there

happened to be a Swillborough man present who knew James Gustavus well by sight. They conversed with one another in awestruck whispers, and then gradually slunk out, each showing a strong dislike to be the last to leave.

It might be supposed that such an event would have been chronicled in every paper in the kingdom the next day. Such, however, was not the case. The representatives of the different news agencies and chief London papers held a hurried consultation together, and came to the conclusion that the safest course would be to ignore the whole affair ; and therefore the only reference to be found to the exciting incident just recorded consisted of the brief announcement that "the House adjourned unexpectedly at 7.30."

In three or four days the excitement reached fever height at St. Stephen's. The few members who were fortunate enough to have been present when the event occurred found themselves the heroes of the hour. Every one wanted to make their acquaintance, and to hear from them over and over again the strange story. The House of Commons police kept repeating it to their friends and acquaintances in the outer lobby, and at last the Psychical Research Society sent down an emissary to investigate the matter scientifically. So strong a hold did the story take on the legislative mind that a marked reluctance to remain in the House during the dinner-hour was plainly shown. However popular James Gustavus might have been in the flesh, no one wanted to see him in the spirit. The frightened legislators were therefore reassured, though also somewhat annoyed at having been taken in, when, a few days after the strange appearance, the newspaper boys were shouting round Westminster, "Serious charges against a late M.P.," and the following police case report appeared :—

"James Gustavus McFadden, late M.P. for Swillborough, was brought up before Mr. Pawn at Bow Street this morning, charged with having embezzled £16,000, held in trust by him for Henry and James Speedwell.

"Mr. Warsaw, Q.C., who appeared for the Treasury, said the late Mr. Speedwell had been

Mayor of Swillborough. On his death he made Mr. McFadden trustee for his two infant children. Suspicion had been aroused by the difficulty experienced in getting the dividends paid, and their mother, Mrs. Speedwell, at last applied to the Court of Chancery and got an order for accounts. As soon as this order was served upon him, Mr. McFadden hurriedly left England for Boulogne, after producing what purported to be a list of the investments in which the trust funds were held. From Boulogne there came a report, which was reproduced in all the papers, to the effect that he had died suddenly, and an elaborate account of his funeral followed. Meantime, inquiries made by Mrs. Speedwell's solicitors showed that £16,000 worth of shares in the Peninsula Railway had been sold out and could not be traced. Evidence would be produced showing that Mr. McFadden had appropriated the proceeds and applied them to his own purposes. It would appear that immediately after his supposed funeral Mr. McFadden returned to London. In fact, there could be but little doubt that he had caused the report of his death to be spread abroad in order to avoid the consequences of his embezzlement. So far, no one had suspected the fraud; but, unfortunately for the success of the scheme, it would seem that one night the prisoner became intoxicated, and while in this condition, according to his usual custom, went down to the House of Commons, where his appearance created considerable astonishment and some alarm. Although no accounts had appeared in the papers, yet this event became the topic of common conversation, being generally attributed to supernatural agency. But Mrs. Speedwell's solicitors thought it more advisable to send a represen-

tative over to Boulogne to make inquiries. Their agent was unable to trace any death as having happened there on the day mentioned, whilst no person of the name of McFadden had been buried in the English cemetery for many years past. Under these circumstances they communicated with Scotland Yard, with the result that the prisoner had been arrested the night before at a small private hotel in the Euston Road.

"Mr. Warsaw produced in evidence the will of Mr. Speedwell, and also called Mrs. Speedwell and Mr. Hakem, of the firm of Hakem & Stoke, who were her solicitors and also solicitors to the trustees.

"The prisoner, who seemed to feel his position very acutely, was committed for trial, the magistrate refusing bail."

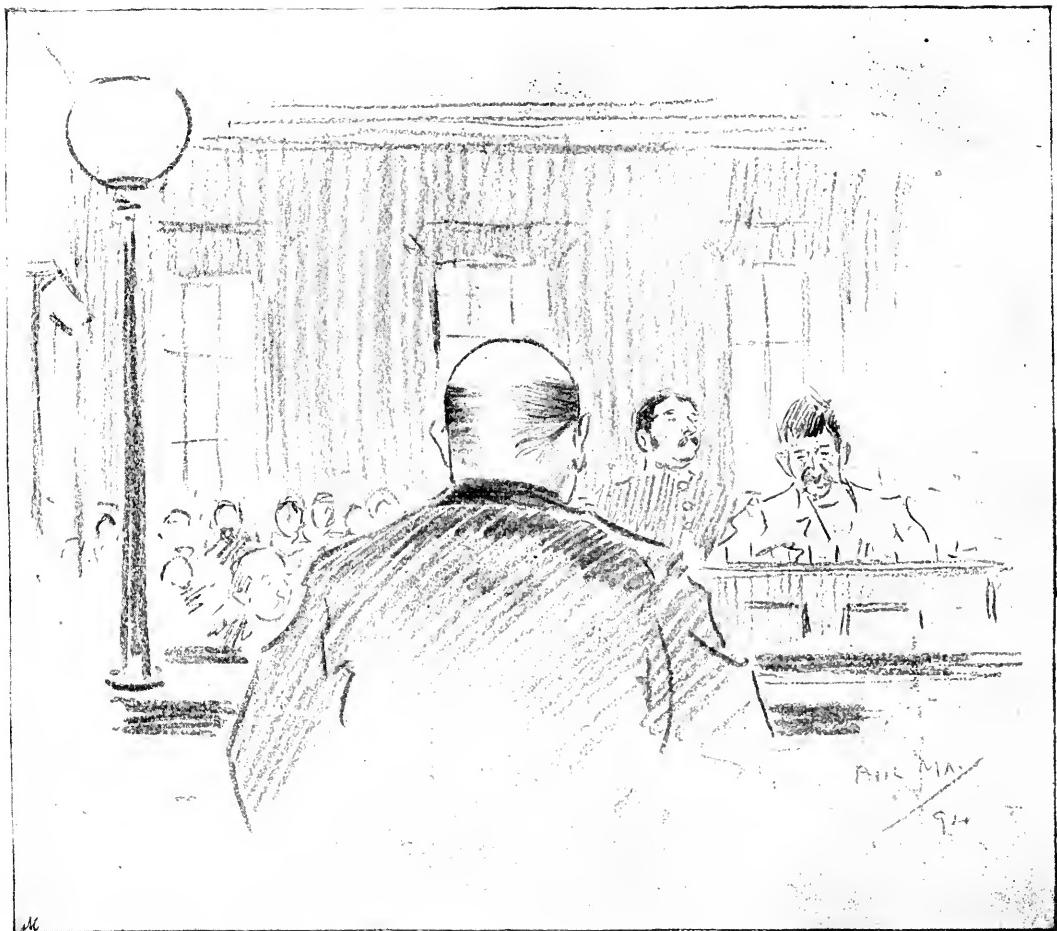
Such was the startling news contained in the evening papers. At the trial at the Old Bailey Mr. Warsaw's statement was borne out in every particular. The sham death, the reappearance, and the embezzlement were all established on the plainest evidence. In the result, the unfortunate old man was found guilty, and sentenced to ten years' penal servitude. It did not appear that he had any special intention of defrauding his dead friend's children, but with his sodden brain he placidly muddled away all the money which came into his hands.

The only individual who expressed no surprise was the little fat Parnellite, who had been fast asleep during Mr. McFadden's last appearance in the House of Commons. "Ah, me bhoy," he would remark confidentially, "there's many a dead man walking about as alive as you or me."



A DILEMMA.

"Have you seen Kate to-day? She's in a dreadful state of mind; Jack Longpurse has returned from India, and she has forgotten which engagement ring is his."



MAGISTRATE : " You are charged with stealing a watch. Do you want a lawyer?"

PRISONER : " No, yer Worship."

MAGISTRATE : " Why not?"

PRISONER : " I'd like to keep the watch myself."



BOHEMIAN LIFE

1D

PARIS

By

ROBERT H. SHERARD.

ONE often hears it said in Paris that the days of *La Vie de Bohème*, as depicted by Henri Murger in his celebrated book of that name, are over and done, that Paris knows the literary and artistic Bohemian no more, and that it is well that this should be so, seeing what utterly useless members of society were Schaumard and his friends. Francisque Sarcey, the critic, who is generally known in Paris as "My Uncle," is particularly emphatic in denying the survival of any such Bohemianism as

was painted by Murger, and congratulates Paris on the circumstance, for he says that Murger, whom he knew, was one of the most wretched specimens of humanity that he ever met with, without a single idea left in his absinthe-sodden brain. I remember his relating how once when in company of Edmond About he fell in with Henri Murger, who complained bitterly that having received an order from a publisher for a serial story, and being very anxious for the sake of the remuneration to fill the bill, he found himself totally unable to evoke a single idea in the way of a plot. Edmond About at once presented him with a very good plot for a story of the kind that Murger was wanted to write, and the author of the *Vie de Bohème* thanked him heartily, saying

that now he was saved, that he would go home and set to work at once, and that he expected to have his story finished in good time. After Murger had left them, About turned to Sarcéy, and said, "Do you think he will write a line of that story? Not he. Supposing even that he sits down to his table to begin upon it, he will get up the next minute and be off to one of his usual haunts. *C'est un homme perdu.*"

It is quite true that to-day the writers and painters of Paris are, as a general rule, steady and sober members of society. Most of the men in view to-day married early and settled down, saved money and performed civic functions with all the domestic and public virtues of a mere grocer or *charcutier*. However, there are very few of the men in view who did not at the beginning of their career pass through that strange land

of Bohemia. Zola, for instance, who to-day lives as soberly as a judge and as comfortably as an English country gentleman, had some terrible experiences at the time when he first started on the conquest of Paris.

There were times in his career when he used to "dress as an Arab," as he himself called it, that is to say when he used to drape himself in the coverlet of his bed, his only suit of clothes having been carried off to the nearest pawnshop to provide for the household expenses of the day. Daudet arrived in Paris in a pair of goloshes, and wore these for a long time till he could afford to buy a pair of boots. He has often told me that during the first years of his life in Paris, he was often so poor that he could not buy boots and used to spend days together in his bed, being unable to go out. Sardou,



who is now as wealthy as an American millionaire, was houseless more than once when a young man in Paris, and indeed, according to his own account, it was whilst meditating on things in general, under the shelter of an archway on a stormy night, when he had no abode to go to, that, deciding that this sort of thing could not possibly continue, he determined to try his luck at writing for the stage, with the result of which everybody knows.

Of the prominent painters similar stories might be related, and of prominent men in the other many walks of life in Paris. Not a few senators, deputies, and even Ministers, who go swelling about in the *Salle des Pas-Perdus*, have passed through periods of Bohemianism of which they would certainly not care to be reminded to-day.

It is not, however, amongst the prominent men that the Bohemians must be looked for. As a general rule, in Paris as everywhere else, as soon as a man becomes prominent he becomes wealthy, and being wealthy prefers to lead a *bourgeois* and regular life. Of course there are and have been exceptions. Thus Barbey d'Aurevilly, one of the most delicate prose-writers of the century, re-



mained a Bohemian down to the last. He used to live in a small room in Montmartre and walked about the streets in a red plush mantle, slouch hat and topboots. Paul Verlaine, considered by many as the foremost living French poet, has always been and remains an incorrigible Bohemian. His works have sold very well and he could command all the money he might wish for, or need, to be enabled to lead as comfortable and as sober a life as say François Coppée or Jean Rameau, but his Bohemianism is so inveterate that it is to be feared

that to the end of his days he will continue to drag his shabby box of clothes about from one furnished Latin quarter hotel to another, knowing no other home than these sordid hotel-rooms, no other pleasures than those of the cafés and drinking-houses, and no other society than that of the



habitues of these places. About the last time that I saw him was down in a cellar of a café on the Place St. Michel, where songs are sung and beer is drunk. He had just come from presiding over a banquet attended by the most prominent writers in Paris, and he was stalking about with a turban on his head and a false nose on his face, though it was not carnival time.

The Latin quarter is full of men as Bohemian in their tastes and habits as Paul Verlaine, but who have not his talents. The student "in his

thirteenth year," who has never passed any examination and never will do so, is quite a familiar feature of the student quarter. He may be seen at any one of the numerous cafés in the St. Michel



A COPYIST AT THE LOUVRE

quarter, and his consumption of beer and tobacco is enormous. Indeed, his one pride in life is to heap up as many saucers in front of himself on the café table in the course of the evening as possible. In Paris, it should be remarked, the waiters keep

count of the number of drinks of which a customer has partaken by leaving the saucer of the pot of beer on the table before him. When the Rabelais quarter of an hour strikes, that is to say, when the drink has to be paid for, the waiter counts the saucers and charges accordingly. Very proud indeed is the student "in his thirteenth year," when he has managed to have the highest pile of saucers of anybody in the café. There is one man who frequents the Muller brasserie in the Rue Soflot, who describes himself as a student of law, and who has a beard reaching nearly to his waist, who boasts that he never leaves the café until he has raised a pile of saucers one metre high. Nobody knows how he lives or where he gets his money from. He was a feature in the Latin quarter ten years ago and will doubtless be so ten years hence.

There are few places in the world where it seems so easy to live and thrive without apparent resources of any kind as in Paris. It is true that in Naples a man can get along very comfortably on nothing a year, but then the conditions of life are different in Naples. One need pay nothing for lodging, for instance, for one can sleep very comfortably in one of the niches of the San Carlo theatre or on the steps of the museum, without risk either of the police or of catching cold. In Paris both risks are serious ones. The police are always on the look-out for homeless vagabonds, and these chance getting sent out to New Caledonia, that is, to say, being transported, if caught too often without domicile. The people, however, of whom I am speaking, though, no doubt, they occasionally patronize the shelter of the bridge-arches for a night's lodgings, are generally very comfortably housed either in a hotel or in a flat. I know a very distinguished poet, who mostly haunts the Latin quarter, who is reputed never to have paid a penny in the way of rent for the last eight years. Yet he has always lived at good addresses and in fine flats. It is true, that beyond a bed, a table and a chair, which are the chattels which neither the landlord can distrain upon for rent, nor the creditor seize, on an execution warrant; this son of the Muses possesses no portable property of any kind. As soon as one landlord is

tired of housing him for nothing and gives him notice to leave he moves off somewhere else. I have seen him on the heights of Montmartre and in the plains of Belleville; in the fashionable Faubourg St. Germain quarter, and in democratic Montrouge. He has no private income and never does any work, whilst the sale of his books, admirable as they are, cannot bring him in more than enough to pay for his tobacco, for even the best poetry has not a large sale in Paris. Yet he is always well-dressed and may be seen at the best cafés. He is one of the many mysteries of Parisian life. Another well-known writer, who quite recently contributed a series of most sensational articles to the Paris *Figaro*, and who for the past ten years has been looked upon as the coming man, leads a life fully as mysterious. He

is constantly changing his address and his restaurant, and seems to have also solved the problem of how

to live on nothing,

using whatever

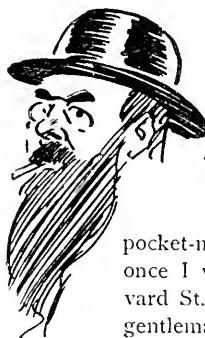
RAT MORT. his pen may bring in for his pleasures and

pocket-money. I remember, that once I was walking down the Boulevard St. Michel with a young Breton gentleman, who had recently run away from home to try his hand at

literature in Paris, when we met the writer of whom I am speaking. It was a very cold day, and the young Breton, who had no overcoat, was shivering with cold. The distinguished Bohemian wore a very comfortable fur-lined overcoat, with the collar raised. As soon as the Breton saw him he left me and rushed up to him and an animated conversation ensued. I could not hear what they were saying, but I saw the Bohemian suddenly unbutton his fur-coat, and reveal that underneath it there was neither coat nor waistcoat, only a very dirty shirt. Thereupon the Breton shrugged his shoulders and turned away apparently very dissatisfied. When he had joined me, I asked him what was the matter, and he told me that some weeks pre-

viously he had been collaborating with the man we had just met, on a five-act tragedy, and that he had lent his collaborator the fine overcoat which I had just seen, so that he might have a presentable appearance when calling on the theatrical managers, for the purpose of placing the five-act tragedy afore-mentioned. Since then the collaboration had ceased, his collaborator had disappeared, and the handsome fur coat had not been returned. "I asked him for it to-day," he continued, "but as you saw he told me, and proved it, that he had nothing else to wear, for he has sold his last coat and waistcoat, and of course I can't let him go about the streets in his shirt-sleeves." The young Breton, by the way, has quite recently determined to forsake Bohemia for good, and is, I hear, about to assume the functions of greffier, or clerk of the court to a county-court judge in a small town in his native Brittany. He tried to live by poetry in Paris; and indeed succeeded to a certain extent, for he leaves no debts, and existed, miserably no doubt, on the proceeds of his pen during all the time that he was in Paris.

The Quartier Latin swarms with Bohemians of every kind. Many of them are men of real talents, who will never make their way simply because of their Bohemian instincts. There are men of high literary talents, composers who might make a great name, painters, sculptors, barristers, and so on, who may be numbered by the score, who never will do anything more than they have done. The lounging life of the Boulevard St. Michel and the cafés has taken firm hold of them, and before piled-



up saucers, they dream of great achievements in their several arts, and discuss for hours together on points of technique and craftsmanship. I know a very clever composer who visits the Quartier Latin every night, and may be heard humming his latest compositions as he walks along, or in the corner of his favourite brasserie. No persuasion, however, will ever induce him to put his mélodies on paper, for laziness is one of the characteristics of the true Bohemian. He is satisfied with the reputation he enjoys amongst his other Bohemian friends and the applause which is won for him by some particularly well-hummed composition. In the matter of beer-drinking, however, he is most assiduous. The heights of Montmartre are also crowded with specimens of the Bohemian race, recruited for the most part from persons who have exhausted their credit down to the last sou in the more hospitable Latin quarter. For let it be said to the honour of the tradesmen of the Latin quarter that they are men of great confidence in human nature, and to some extent also patrons of art. That is to say that a restaurant-keeper, if he likes a man's poetry, or prose, or pictures, or musical compositions, and judging of their probable eventual success from his own opinion of their merits, will open an account with that poet or painter, or musical composer, in the hope of being amply repaid when the man makes his mark. Many of the caterers in the Latin quarter have thus invested really large sums in their confidence in the eventual success of their various protégés. Salis, late of the Chat Noir, lived for years on the confidence of various hotels and restaurant-keepers on the other side of the water, and in the end fully justified this confidence. Another well-known poet and *chansonnier* began to make money when his



restaurateur, to whom he owed a large sum of money, suggested that he should work off his debt

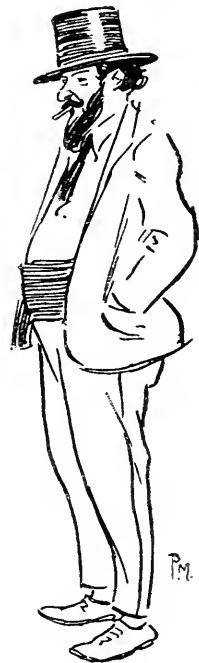
by giving a concert every night in the café. The poet sang his own songs, just as Bruant does up at the Mirliton café on the Boulevard Rochechouart, and was accompanied on the piano by the young lady who graced his garret-home. The songs became a great success, and the café was filled nightly. In this way the poet was able to work off his debt to his patron, and now makes a very good income by his "soirées chantantes" not only in the Latin quarter, but at good houses in Paris. In Montmartre there is no confidence on the part of the tradesmen, and consequently life there is much harder for the Bohemian. It is in the little streets

which abut on the Rue des Martyrs, after the Place des Martyrs has been passed, that the Bohemians of Montmartre must be looked for, and very squalid indeed are these Bohemians, and more squalid their abodes.

Occasionally one of them hits on an idea, and manages to raise his head above water. Who, for instance, has not seen the young man who goes about Montmartre selling olives, which he wraps up in a piece of paper on which his latest sonnet is printed? This is a young poet who got tired of starving in his garret and took to selling olives for a living. His olives being good, and his poetry not so bad, he soon got together a large number of customers, and after a few years had put by enough money to enable him to open a café-concert at Montmartre. But he was too ambitious and too enterprising, and eventually lost all he had saved, so that to-day he is once more to be seen perambulating the streets with his tub of olives under his arm, and his packet of latest sonnets in his pocket. He consoles himself for his passing splendours as a director of a café-concert, with the thought that it was he who first introduced the great Yvette Guil-

bert to the world, and indeed it was on the stage of his *beuglant* that this phenomenally successful young lady first attracted attention. She has not forgotten the circumstance either, and, I believe, helped her former director, at the time of his smash-up, on to his legs again.

It is at night-time that the Bohemians of Montmartre and the Bohemians of the Latin quarter, separate and distinct during the day-time, when for the most part they are lying extended in the discoloured sheets of their garret-lodgings, meet on the common ground of the Halles or Market quarter. All round the Halles, which are situated in the centre of Paris, are numerous restaurants and cafés which keep open all night, and it is here that the nightbirds of Paris congregate. Those who have money frequent such expensive places as Baratte's, where a bottle of beer costs eighteenpence and a cup of coffee one shilling. There is an orchestra of a violin and a guitar here, and songs are sung all night. The house never closes, and sometimes as late as nine o'clock in the morning the Bohemians may be seen issuing forth on their way home to bed, these to the left towards Montmartre, those to the right on their way back across the Seine. Those less well off, who can only afford threepence for a glass of beer, or fourpence for half a litre of wine, will be found patronizing such establishments as Le Petit Caveau, which is reached after climbing down numerous flights of stairs, the drinking-rooms being located in a series of cellars, lighted with flaming gas-jets and roughly furnished with benches and tables. At one end is a kind of grotto, above which appears the notice that drinks must be paid for in advance.



At the other end is a kind of dais on which there is a piano and a gentleman in evening dress, who, during the early hours of the morning, discourses sweet music and ribald songs. The place is largely



frequented by the criminal classes, who, however, seem to get on very well with the Bohemian patrons of this curious establishment. A well-known figure here is that of one of the celebrities of the Latin quarter, a man known by the soubriquet of Bibi-la-Purée, which may be roughly Englished as Hard-up-Jack. Bibi-la-Purée's appearance reminds one of that of Louis XI. of France, and here again is an individual who has discovered the secret of living and getting drunk, without doing regular work of any kind. He is understood to belong to a good family, and is known to be in receipt of an annuity of three hundred and twenty francs a year. It appears that on the quarter days when he receives his annuity, a ragged man may be seen riding about Paris in cabs, and in the evening one or other of the Latin quarter establishments receives him as a guest who spends without counting. He never has a farthing the next day. He is the intimate friend of Paul Verlaine, and was recently described as such by a barrister before one of the civil courts of Paris. His testimony had been invoked in some matter concerning a low-class lodging-house, and the judges seemed inclined to distrust his evidence on account of the man's extraordinarily shabby appearance. It was then that the barrister

informed them that the man before them was the sodalis of the greatest living French poet. Bibi carries blacking brushes in his pocket, and may be seen throwing himself down on his knees, at a moment's notice, or rather without notice of any kind, to give a friend or some likely patron a "shine." He acts also as Jack-of-all-Trades to the grisettes of the quarter, and is engaged in most of the furtive household removals of the quarter. Apropos of the grisette, it is often said that this type is as extinct as the dodo. One wouldn't think so to see the number of irregular menages that exist throughout Paris Bohemia. Certainly the young lady who prefers the roses and raptures, to the lilies and langours, has grown wiser in her generation since the days of Murger, and drives a better bargain for herself than did poor Mimi Pinson. She also dresses very much better than did that young lady, and frequents the best cafés with her husband—for the time being. In very many cases these Quartier Latin *liaisons* end happily, being definitely consecrated by the priest or the registrar.

Though I have spoken only of Montmartre and of the Latin quarter in dealing with the modern Bohemians of Paris, it may be mentioned that types of this class may be found all over Paris. A typical Bohemian may be seen any day at the Grand Café, in the person of a tall old man with



straggling white hair and beard, who is constantly engaged in writing. This is an old Pole, who

HARRY THOMPSON
OF PARIS



A BOHEMIAN.

formerly possessed a fine property in Poland, and who after having squandered his property in gambling, has been living for the past ten years in Paris—he only knows how. His writings are curious little two-page pamphlets on the social question in the strangest Russian. These pamphlets he sends all over the world to all the princes and potentates whom he can think of, from the Pope to the King of Siam, enclosed in unfranked envelopes. He also distributes them on the boulevards. This curious profession seems to enable him to live, for he is considered a good customer

at the Grand Café, and gives the biggest tips of anybody frequenting the establishment. It is said that considerable sums of money often reach him anonymously or otherwise. He lives in a small room in a hotel behind the Opera, which is principally furnished with empty match-boxes. I have seen him playing the violin in the orchestra of a small Montmartre café-concert, and I believe that I once recognised him driving a cab. He is but one of hundreds of extraordinary types of Bohemians, who, in spite of all that has been said to the contrary, still exist in Paris.



PUBLIC BATHS

SWIMMING BATH

HOT & COLD BA

PRICES

6' AND



"'Ave yer ever 'ad a bath, Bill?"
"No ; bat I once 'ad my neck washed."



A GERMAN PROFESSOR.

LIKE A MAN.

By MORLEY ROBERTS.

WE were sitting in the saloon at Glen Ellen, Sonoma County, California, and as it was November, we were glad to get to the stove. Most of us steamed ; for the whole valley was in a mist with rain, and the creeks ran roaring.

"A good day for still-hunting," said Josiah, who was deeply engaged with a chew of tobacco.

"If there was anything to hunt," growled an oldish man, whom none of us knew. "There's nothin' but a few measly deer of sorts round about this country nowadays. Nary a Californian lion, nor a grizzly. One has to go far for any kind of real game."

And he put such an emphasis on "real," that those of us who sometimes shot a deer fairly squirmed. We knew we were in the presence of a Nimrod.

He was a stout-looking man, with greyish hair and beard ; but for all his hinted disgust with Central Californian hunting of the present time, there was a curious twinkle in his eyes that showed humour. And noting that, I chipped in,—

"If you're an old-timer, maybe you saw something real in the way of sport, eh?"

He nodded.

"And if it was warm, and I warn't soaked and dodrotted miser'ble right to the skin, I could spin you sellers yarns about them days as would make you open them eyes of yours."

"Tom," said Josiah to the bar-tender, who was wiping the steam from the window with the flat of his hand, "bring this gentleman something. Come, sir, what will you take?"

The hunting gentleman accepted some old rye. And it sank into his memory, bringing the colours out strong, and his imagination revived as the whisky got into him.

"You don't mind, none of you, when bears was

as thick in Sonoma County as grapes is now. A man couldn't walk a mile without running butt ag'in a black bear and the very least. And the squeal of a young pig at night fetched the grizzlies out o' the hills like flies for meat. And my favourite game then was potting the black bears up the pines. They'd jest climb up a two hundred feet tree, and think no more of it than you and me'd of goin' upstairs to bed. And it was the best kind of fun to shoot bears as one would shoot a bird. Lordy, but how you would admire to see a six-hundred-pound bear rear up and over, and come down kerflummix with a whack that knocked all the stuffing out of him ! And the way he clawed the air was something surprising. I've killed 'em flying ; for at that time I was a daisy with any sort of a gun. I mind just chipping the paw of one, and he got so savage that he missed his tip, and down he come like a case broke out of the slings. I put three bullets into him before he touched the ground. He fell three hundred feet or nigh. When he hit the rocks down below he was dead."

And the old man drank.

"Tom," said I, "I think this gentleman will drink again ; and as it shows no signs of clearing up, I'll have one with him."

We drank solemnly, and Tom came over and took a chair by the stove. The old man rambled on.

"But that warn't more'n an amusement. It was no-ways dangerous. Bless you, it takes all the fight plum out of the grittiest bear to fall so far. But I mind one time I had a time of it that war risky, if you like. I was workin'—minin', you know—at the Silver Star Mine, and one Sunday I clawed my gun and went out to kill. When luck's ag'in a man, he must drink or slay. There's nothin'

makes a man quiet in a bad streak like whisky or blood or a good scrap when he gets licked,—well licked, you know. So I went out with a bloody mind, and steered right ahead into the lowest kind of place I could hit on. I didn't take no notice where I was goin', but I got into the bush and lost myself,—fair lost myself. And the chaparall was as thick as the bristles of a brush, and all locked together, and bimeby I struck right on the tracks of a bear I knowed. You bet I knew the foot of every big bear round about, and this one had come nosin' round our shack time out of mind. His paw was as big as an elephant's ; it covered a piece of country as big as any Chicago foot could do. It was long and broad, and the claws of him was claws like old Scratch's, and they sunk into the ground as if he was planting peas in a row, making holes with a stick. And I was that wild ag'in my week's luck, that I never steadied myself to consider, but I crawled after him. And the chaparall got so thick, that it took a bear like him to get through. It would have stuck a locomotive, and in a bit I had to work here and there to find an easy way. And presently I went down on all-fours, and then

on my flat, pulling my gun along. And still it grew thicker, and just as I was makin' up my mind to stay there like a trapped fox, I see jest a bit of light ahead. And giving one tremenjus heave, I got my head into the open. But another inch, fore or back, I couldn't stir. No, not for all hell."

And he drank again. We waited patiently as the rain beat against the windows. He turned towards Josiah,—

"No, there warn't no movin' ! and what d'ye think I see ?"

"The bear, mebbe," said Josiah eagerly.

"Right the first time," answered the hunter. "And he was as big as a barn, and when he see me he rared up on his hind legs, and let off a kind of chest thunder, that sounded like a far-off snow slide in the mountains. And I——"

"Yes, yes," said Josiah ; "and what did you do ?"

The old man reached for his glass, emptied it, put it down slowly, and turned suddenly and savagely on the crowd.

"Do ! do ! what the blazes could I do ? I just died like a man."





EXTINCT TYPES.—THE SHOWMAN



SECOND SIGHT.

NEMESIS WINS.

By GRANT ALLEN.

MIRIAM STANLEY stood leaning against the big shrew-ash in Hurtwood Copse, her straw hat in her hand, her dark hair down her back, her full bosom heaving. She was a king's daughter. For Septerius Stanley, twenty-fourth of the name, was undisputed king of the West Surrey gipsies. Not a van on the circuit denied his title. Yet these are evil days for kings and fathers. Royal and parental authority was never so lightly set at nought. In Sweden, a Bernadotte renounces the crown to marry a commoner; in Hurtwood Copse, a princess of the Rommany stood waiting, hat in hand, for a Gorgio lover.

Things had not been so in Septerius Stanley's young days. Then a Rommany lass wedded none but a Rommany. She took as lord the man whom the king designed for her, subject only to certain dark mediaeval reservations in favour of the king's right to his tribesmen's fealty. In these degenerate days, however, the new-fangled school-board has fixed its stern eye even on gipsy lasses. Miriam Stanley had been taught to read and write—useless lore of the Gorgios; little might it avail her for success in fortune-telling, or for cajoling the nimble half-crown from the townsman's pocket. Worse than that, she had learnt at school to comb her hair and wash her face; and though her thick black locks still streamed loosely over her shoulder, they had no longer that picturesque and tangled freedom, that unkempt beauty, as of some wild creature of the woods, which pays best, Septerius well knew, among the heather or on the race-course. Miriam was going all wrong; that was the long and the short of it. She was growing respectable. Septerius Stanley felt in his heart she despised her native royal van; he even vaguely

suspected her of a base desire to marry a Gorgio, and settle down into wedded working-class domesticity.

That was a blow to Septerius, a true gipsy, pure blood; for his mother was a Faa, of the royal Scotch race, while his father was the head of the house of Stanley. And the Stanleys, I need hardly say, are universally known as the finest flower of the Rommany aristocracy.

Yet Miriam was true Rommany after all in one thing: the untamable freedom which made her decide for herself to live her own life her own chosen way, in spite of such obstacles as kings or fathers. The Rommany chief was a despot over his tribe; but little could he or his dynasty do against the headstrong will of his dark-eyed daughter.

Miriam stood there, hat in hand, with head held on one side, listening long and eagerly. Her senses were quick with the inherited quickness of her moorland ancestry. Presently she gave a sharp little sigh of relief. Not a sound stirred the air for your ears or mine; but hers had caught faintly some distant tremor of the ground that announced the approach of a man's heavy footstep. She knew already whose footstep that was. It filled and thrilled her. The colour rushed deeper to that flushed dark cheek. "It's him!" she thought to herself, regardless of board-schools. "It's Jim! he's coming!"

In a minute or two more, the footstep fell heavier on the greensward of the footpath,—a velvety, grassy path that threaded the chestnut grove. Then Miriam's heart beat high. Next minute a young man came in sight round the larches. He was tall and well-built, a good-looking young

Gorgio. In point of fact, he was the Hurtwood gamekeeper.

Now to you and me a gamekeeper is a gamekeeper. But to Miriam he was not only the dearest thing on earth : he was also respectability, romance, the forbidden. In her eyes it was as much revolt to marry a gentleman's servant as it would be to a countess to marry a gipsy.

The young man stole up to her, with a hasty glance to right and left. He was proud, yet half ashamed, of his gipsy lover. In reality Miriam Stanley was a beautiful girl, very quick and clever, and far his superior in most qualities worth having ; but gamekeepers, mind you, have also their society, their pride, their conventions : they think twice before allying themselves with a gipsy family. It was only true love that could have drawn Jim Sladen into asking Miriam Stanley to accept him in marriage, just as it can only be true love that leads a gentleman to offer his hand and name to some beautiful girl whom he considers beneath him.

"Marry a gipsy girl!" cried the gossips of the heath. "And she'd be his without it! But, there, you know, Jim was always such a silly one!"

He raised his hat to her like a gentleman. That was odd for a gamekeeper. But somehow Jim felt, though Miriam was a gipsy girl, and 'twas condescension on his part to think of marrying her properly, with book and parson, yet in a sort of way she was a lady too ; and as such in most matters he always treated her. She was a king's daughter ; her queenliness brought out the latent chivalry of his nature.

He took her hand in his. Miriam's face was rosy red through the dusky skin. She let her fingers lie still in the man's hard palm half reluctantly for a moment. Then she turned to him, shaken with passion. He was tall and handsome, and a Gorgio, and forbidden. "Jim," she cried, holding her breath, "I could hardly get away. If father knew it, oh, Jim, he'd just murder me!"

The young man seized her in his arms, and clasped her hard against his bosom. "Miriam," he answered, in his north-country accent, raised

for a moment above his own level, "when I see thee, lass, I don't mind about thy father. He may murder me, if he will ; but I love thee : I love thee. To be here with thee in t' e copse is more to me than to be an angel in heaven."

II.

That night at the Frying Pan the cronies of the heath sat at beer together. It was a curious company ; for the Frying Pan is reckoned the most lawless inn of a wild moorland country. There was Sam Walters, the broom-squire, a squatter on the common, who made brushes for sale out of the heather and the chestnut saplings. There were the men from the pool, and the poacher on the hill-top, and young Dick, the half-wit, and two gamekeepers from the Hall, and Septerius Stanley, with his gipsy following. Septerius that night was in main bad humour. Two things had disturbed him. The first thing was that Squire Ponsonby of Hurtwood had passed him by as he rode that afternoon, and with an angry nod had said something uncivil about cutting gorse for the horses on the common. It was Septerius's way to cut the young shoots and chop them fine for fodder ; and experience showed him that when the Squire in passing mumbled and muttered some words of disapprobation they were sure to be followed by a speedy visit from the country police, and a request to "move on" to more distant quarters. And the second thing was that young Timothy Smith, a most acute young gipsy, for whom he destined Miriam, had told him that day people were talking on the hill-top how Miriam had been seen speaking close with Jim Sladen, the Hurtwood gamekeeper. Now, nobody liked Jim Sladen, because he was a north-countryman, without friends in the district, and reputed honest. He wouldn't accept little presents from poachers ; and his views on the duties of his situation took the broom-squire's breath away. So everybody joined Septerius in denouncing Jim Sladen—a kinless loon, who cared nothing for anybody.

Then Sam Walters, the broom-maker, spoke ill of Squire Ponsonby,—a meddlesome, grasping, cheese-paring landlord ! At that the innkeeper

expected Septerius to bridle up with indignation ; for it was no secret on the hill-top that the gipsy king did not waste much affection on the owner of Hurtwood. But instead of that, to everybody's surprise, Septerius held his stump of clay pipe reflectively in one hand, and murmured half aloud, "There's worse men in the world by a sight than Squire Ponsonby. There's worse men in the world ; you take a ole gipsy's word for't."

"His heath'll ketch fire one o' these fine nights," the broom-maker muttered to himself, as if musing. "Been powerful hot o' late. Heather's dry as tinder. Surprisin' if Squire Ponsonby's heath don't get lighted somehow."

"Don't you go a-lightin' it !" the gipsy said surly, sipping his mug of bitter. "If there's a fire in it now, we'll all of us know whose pipe's been doin' it."

"Wot's Septerius so lovin' like to the Squire for to-night ?" young Dick the half-wit asked, with a knowing grin. "He don't generally have no love lost with Squire now, do he ?"

"There's two ways o' doin' things," the innkeeper answered, with an oracular air. Your innkeeper is *ex-officio* a man of the world. "One way's to go straight, and one's to go crooked. Sam Walters, he goes straight ; but he don't always get there. Muster Stanley, he goes crooked ; but he gets there in the end, as sure as gospel."

Septerius smiled. He accepted the compliment as an eulogy on his intelligence. When a man wants to do a bad turn to the Squire or other powers that be, he must surely be a fool to proclaim to all the world the secret of his animosity, like that born idiot Sam Walters. So the gipsy smiled and temporised. "Squire's not so hard on the bench as some," he observed with genial tolerance. "Give me six weeks for that job last year. There's many a one in the county as 'ud have committed for trial." And he finished his beer, and gazed round him for approbation.

"Where's Jim Sladen to-night ?" one of the men from the pool inquired, just to keep things moving. "It's high time he was come. He looks in for a bit by nine most evenings."

"Sneakin' round the copse," the poacher sug-

gested, with a sneer of contempt. They had never had such a gamekeeper at Hurtwood as Jim Sladen.

But the half-wit burst out laughing, and looked hard at Sam Walters. "No, he ain't," he answered aloud, with a violent giggle. "No, he ain't at Hurtwood. Us do know where he are ; don't us so, Muster Walters ?"

Sam Walters smiled and nodded, with a suggestive wink. "Yes, us do know, boy," he answered, and glanced furtively at Septerius.

The gipsy scented a plot. "Where is he ?" he cried, leaning forward in his seat. His face was murderous. For he half suspected what was coming ; and his gipsy sense of honour was involved in the disclosure.

But the half-wit chuckled. "No, no," he answered, with a half-glance towards the broom-squire. "Us ain't a-goin' to tell you. You might wish 'em a grudge. Young folk will be young folk ; won't 'em, so, Muster Landlord ?"

The gipsy's eye flashed fire ; but he kept outwardly calm. "Where is he, boy ?" he asked, in so authoritative a tone that the half-wit trembled.

"We seen un," the lad answered, gazing helplessly at the broom-squire, "coming up the lane—and—"

The broom-squire eyed him close. "And your Miriam comin' down it," he continued slowly.

Before the words were well out of his mouth the gipsy was upon him. A knife gleamed in his hand, and murder in his eye. He was black with fierce wrath. For a second the knife flashed. Then the landlord interposed. Quicker than lightning he had seized his man and bundled him out of the bar. Septerius felt three pairs of stout arms clasped round him. The poacher and the broom-squire had assisted law and order in the innkeeper's person.

III.

Septerius strode angrily down the footpath homeward. Home was the van ; it stood lost in the heather. His heart within him burned bright for vengeance—a threefold vengeance. He would avenge himself on the Squire, who had threatened

to turn him ignominiously off the common ; he would avenge himself on Sam Walters, who had insulted his girl, and through his girl the whole gipsy nation ; and he would avenge himself on Jim Sladen, that north-country sneak, who had brought all these other minor troubles upon him. Jim should never have the girl ; that Septerius determined in his mind at once. And as soon as he had time to avenge himself on these three, he could thrash Miriam within an inch of her life for daring to get herself talked about with a slip of a Gorgio ; and then he would marry her to Timothy Smith, that pure-blooded Rommany.

As he strode angrily on, a scheme formed itself in his mind, an easy scheme that arose of itself, while he walked fiercely forward. He repeated to himself the landlord's words, "There's two ways o' doin' things. One's to go straight, and one's to go crooked." *He* meant to go crooked. It was crooked would carry it. He saw a way to injure all three at once ; and then he could go home and half murder Miriam.

A can of petroleum and a match would settle it. All the inn had heard Sam Walters threaten that the Squire's heath would catch fire one of these fine nights. If the heath caught fire, 'twould be Sam Walters that did it. The heath was the Squire's, and the pinewood beyond. Fires constantly in the heath, some one shaking out a pipe, or something of that sort. But it was Jim Sladen's business to be watching the wood ; and he was two miles off, gallivanting with Miriam. A fire to-night would make him lose his place. Squire would send him back quick march to his home in the north again.

If he didn't, Septerius would have it out of Jim somehow.

He strode angrily home, and waited an hour in the gloom till the lights disappeared from the windows of the Frying Pan. He saw Sam Walters pass by on his straggling way homeward to his solitary hut in Polecat Bottom. Then he strode forth again with his petroleum can, his matches, and his lantern. The night was pitch-dark. A gentle breeze blew from the south-west. Not a soul was stirring. The heather was dry as tinder

from the protracted drought. All went well for his scheme. He would spoil a hundred acres of the Squire's woodland ; he would get Sam Walters five years in gaol ; and he would send Jim Sladen crying back to the north country.

He crept along the moor to a convenient point a few hundred yards to windward of the Kington Firs pinewood. Then he steeped a rag or two in petroleum, and began lighting them hurriedly. Not a soul was about. Only, behind him crawled a second figure, which had been watching him unobserved from the moment he quitted the van on the common.

He laid the burning rags low on the ground in a wide sweeping semicircle. He laid them crooked on purpose, because the fancy so took him. "There's two ways o' goin' to work," he murmured to himself once more, "and I goes crooked." Rapidly the flames flared upward to the sky. It was an awful sight ; but Septerius rejoiced in it. Red tongues of fire leapt forward through the heather ; black clouds of dense smoke rose curling among them. In haste Septerius laid his rags, then turned to flee. The red light now lighted the whole expanse of the sky. It was time to go. In ten minutes more the countryside would be raised, and the beaters would beat it out—if they could—before it reached the pinewood.

But as he turned to flee a sudden terror overcame him. What could this prodigy mean ? He had lighted his fire in a semicircle, like a bent bow ; but another line of fire now ran straight across it from end to end like the string that should bound it. In a moment Septerius guessed what horror had happened. Sam Walters had outwitted him and lighted it behind him. While *he* went crooked, Sam Walters had gone straight. He was hemmed between two fires. He must burst his way out, or be burnt to death as he stood there.

With one wild shriek, he rushed on the column of flame. The blazing heather was hot under foot ; the fire scorched, the black smoke choked him. He staggered and fell. A cry as of triumph rang in his ears from beyond as he sank and lost consciousness. The fire seized on his clothes ;

the foul air asphyxiated him. He lay where he fell. The West Surrey gipsies were kingless.

Next day they found on the moor the whitened, fleshless bones of a man with a petroleum can.

"Hoist with his own petard!" the Squire said, smiling grimly. But Sam Walters only muttered, "There's two ways o' doin' things. One's to go straight, an' one's to go crooked."





"Yes, I've ridden all my life, on and off."

"Well, I've only ridden once, and it was mostly off."



THOUGHTLESS OF HER.

"If you was 'arf a man you'd offer to carry some o' these bundles."
"'Ow can I with my 'ands in my pockets?"



M. M. May

A GENTLEMAN OF THE OLD SCHOOL

JUAN : THE TRAGEDY OF A DOG.

By CHARLES HARRIE ABBOTT.

I.

"A NOTHER blank!" muttered Swinyard, as he left the publisher's office with a roll of manuscript under his arm, "another blank!"

"Swinyard's a charming fellow," said the old Obadiah.

"Yes," assented the young Obadiah, "he's always the same—always the same. I'm sorry we don't like his book."

"Curse these uneducated publishers!" thought Swinyard concurrently.

This was the third novel he had written. The first was short and unpretentious. It had been reviewed with a universal cordiality. But it did not sell. The second was longer and more ambitious, and it the critics had unanimously (to use a platitude) "damned with faint praise," so that it died a quiet and natural death at a very early age. He cursed his critics in his heart, and told himself that he had shown that amount of genius which begets enmity—a conclusion which afforded him little or no consolation. The failure of his two printed efforts and the general rejection of his third aggravated a naturally bad temper, and it cost him some struggling to practise an outward cheerfulness.

He was a handsome man, tall and, at the moment, immaculately dressed for the afternoon—an imposing figure as he walked with a military swagger along Fleet Street and the Strand.

In the Strand he met Melrose, an actor and a bridegroom, and his wife, whom Melrose introduced to Swinyard, who greeted her with some commonplace observation, which, such was his easy and graceful way, did not seem commonplace, but evidently pleased her.

Mrs. Melrose was an amateur actress. In the

cause of charity she had recently performed in a pastoral play with immense success, for she was very beautiful, and her beauty was instrumental in getting her acting extolled in some of the magazines. Swinyard remarked upon her playing. Indeed she was, he told her, the subject of his very latest article. It was a lie which could easily be rectified, for was he not connected with more than one journal?

"Talking of plays," said Melrose, "you're the very man we wanted to see."

"Oh, yes!" ejaculated his wife.

"I've got a capital idea for a duologue," continued the actor, "which I thought my wife and I might do at benefit matinees. You know, we're continually being asked to do something at these kind of shows, and we always have to refuse because we never have anything ready. Well, I've got an idea—it came to me in the middle of the night—it's awfully good—only I'm not equal to writing it myself, and I thought perhaps you would like to do it for us?"

This was the first time Swinyard had ever heard an actor plead inability in anything.

"I should be happy," he said, "if I could help to fit Mrs. Melrose with a good character."

"And me as well," broke in her husband.

"Oh, of course," said Swinyard; "but I daresay you've looked after yourself in the plot."

"No, I haven't. By the way," he said suddenly, "what are you doing to-night?"

"Working."

"If this short notice won't offend you, will you dine with us, and we can talk it over after dinner?"

"Oh, *do!*!" seconded Mrs. Melrose; "and bring Mrs. Swinyard with you," she added.

"Thank you, Mrs. Melrose," said Swinyard, "it is really very kind of you, and I should be charmed, but—"

"But," echoed Mrs. Melrose, "you're not going to refuse?"

"I'm afraid I must. I am dining quietly at home to-night, and I have promised myself a long writing evening afterwards."

"Look here!" exclaimed Melrose, "you're still at Charing Cross Road, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"Well, we're in a flat in Shaftesbury Avenue, only a stone's throw,—so you really must dine with us to-night, and—"

"And," interrupted his wife, "we'll excuse you directly after dinner, if you *must* go. Mrs. Swinyard, perhaps, would like to stay on with me and—"

"And," continued her husband, "when you're tired of your work, come over for your wife, and smoke a quiet cigar with me."

But Swinyard excused himself. He had work which must be done by the morning.

"I understand," said Melrose; "but if anything happens to change your mind, we dine at seven-thirty."

And so they parted.

"So that's Mr. Swinyard," said Mrs. Melrose.

"Yes, dear; what d'you think of him?"

"Oh, he's charming—and he's quite got the tone, hasn't he?"

II.

Swinyard reached his chambers in Charing Cross Road. There was an inner door to the entrance of the "mansions," which he banged, and the noise reverberated through the building. Juan, the little fox-terrier, knew his master's bang, and barked. When Swinyard got to the first floor, Juan barked louder; when he arrived on the second and his own landing, the barking grew louder still and more impatient, and was accompanied by a scratching at the door. And when he opened the door, Juan sprang upon him for very love of his master. The dog followed Swinyard into the dining-room and barked at him, and leapt up at him,

and danced round and round him, until it was fairly exhausted, and then it squatted itself on Mrs. Swinyard's lap in order only to obtain a perfect view of her husband; and when she crossed over to give him a wifely welcome, Juan came between them in a jealous burst of barks and leaps and bounds. He was only a half-bred, but a smart and pretty little fellow, with a very long nose, and an even V-shaped parting of white on the head, black-and-tan face, longish tail, and a perfectly round spot on the saddle of the back.

Swinyard was fond of the dog. It bored him sometimes, and he whipped it for its disobedience. He tried to teach it tricks, and he thrashed it for its stubbornness. Nevertheless, he was fond of the dog. When the weather was fine (it had been wet to-day) he nearly always took it to the office with him. If, for some reason or other, he left it at home and chanced to meet a friend, one of the first questions that friend would ask would be, "Where's Juan?" Indoors he could rarely settle down to work unless it were in sight. It sat up alone with him half the night and morning during the hours of his composition, and afterwards retired in their room on the floor by *his* side of the bed.

But if Swinyard was fond of the dog, how much better did his wife love him. Next to her husband she loved Juan. She loved Juan for loving him—not because the dog loved her. He had little or no affection for her, pretty and gentle and lovable little girl as she was. He took no notice of her when her husband was near, and requited her but poorly when he was away. He looked upon her as a grand stand on which to view his master, and sometimes as a protection against him. But she was his best friend, if he only knew it.

Mrs. Swinyard was not in the room when her husband entered. She followed him immediately. She wore a servant's apron over her neat and plain black gown. She relieved Swinyard of his hat and cane, and he sank down in the easy chair. Juan had his chin on his master's knee and was looking up into his face.

"What's the time?" Swinyard asked, and answered himself by looking at his watch. "Ten past seven," he said negligently. Then he seemed to

be struck with the lateness of the hour. "Dinner's late."

"Yes, dear."

"It's ten minutes past seven," he repeated techily, "and the table isn't even laid. How is it?"

"I've had some trouble with Hewitt again. She's been impertinent, and actually refused to work. I've had to get the dinner ready all by myself"; and she drew his attention to her apron.

"But it's not ready," he said, never caring whose trouble it was to get it ready. .

"It won't be long, dear. Hewitt's dishing it now, and—and it won't take me a minute to lay the table."

She busied herself at once, while he toyed with the dog.

"Hewitt," she went on, "has been sitting down in the middle of the kitchen because I disputed the change she brought me out of ——"

"Oh, don't ram the servant down my throat directly I come home!" Juan crouched away. "Get rid of her!"

"I am getting rid of her, but ——"

"I can't listen now. I'm collecting my thoughts for this evening's work. Tell Hewitt——"

"I think, Hugh, if you were to speak to her quietly ——"

"It's not my province to speak to the servants. Give her to understand that if we have any more of her nonsense she's turned out on the instant. Now hurry on the dinner, there's a good girl. Juan! Juan!"

But the smell of the dinner called Juan in another direction, and he followed Mrs. Swinyard out of the room.

Swinyard took up the evening paper, sat down again, and alternately looked at it and his watch.

It was now half-past seven, half an hour after their dinner-time, and the meal had not yet appeared.

Mrs. Swinyard re-entered the room.

"For God's sake, Edith, do try to manage these things differently. A delay like this spoils my temper and affects my work. I shan't be able to write a line to-night after this. Where's Hewitt? I'll——"

"Hush! she's coming. Please don't say anything to her now. I can't afford to lose her before I get a new girl."

At last dinner was served. Hewitt removed the cover. It was hashed mutton! An oath rose to Swinyard's lips, but he suppressed it. He waited till the girl had left the room. He closed the door after her. Mrs. Swinyard knew what that meant. He swore at his wife; it was not the first time he had done so. A year ago she would have shrunk within herself, paralysed at his cruel words; now she had, to some degree, schooled herself to them, but they affected her still, they bruised her heart and left their mark all the same.

She looked for Juan. Sometimes her husband's anger fell upon the innocent dog. It relieved her to know that he was not in the room. Swinyard had shut the door and shut Juan out.

Then he denounced hashed mutton as angry husbands will.

"Have I not told you over and over again that I can't eat hashed mutton?"

"I had nothing else, Hugh. I had no money to buy a fresh joint. You know, dear, you are just four weeks in arrear with the housekeeping money——"

"Don't tell me that again. How have you managed the last month, then?"

"I've got into debt with the tradespeople—only a little, Hugh; I couldn't help it."

"Do you mean to say we've been living on credit for the last month?"

"Not altogether; I—I——"

"Well, I what?"

"Nothing, dear."

"What is it?"

"Well, I've been using the money you gave me for copying out your novel."

This stung him, and he felt ashamed; but, instead of showing contrition, his ill-nature and worse temper got the better of him, and he thought of the cruellest thing to say and the meanest thing to do.

"Oh," and he sneered, "since you've bought that hashed mutton with your own money I won't rob you of it. You can eat it yourself. I'll dine out."

He took up his hat and cane and left the room.

"I'll dine at Scott's," he told himself, as he entered the bedroom.

It was dark. The gas was burning low down. He turned it up. Could he believe his eyes? The bed was covered with his clean linen, newly brought home by the laundress, and stretched on the fronts of some of his dress-shirts was Juan, picking a bone.

The dog looked up at him. He looked down at the dog. Juan blinked, and re-engaged himself with his bone. Swinyard, quick as lightning, brought his cane down with all his strength on the dog's back. Juan squealed. The cane was uplifted again, but Swinyard paused. The dog lay as if struggling its last. But the briefest space elapsed before the dining-room door was opened, and Juan, rising from his prostration like the phoenix, found an asylum in his mistress's arms.

Swinyard left the house—and the hashed mutton to Edith, while he, who was in debt to his wife, intended to fare sumptuously at an expensive restaurant. But that did not surprise or shock poor little Mrs. Swinyard, who was not unused to such proceedings. She had been married two years now, and they had been years of trouble and disappointment. Her father had died, and the mask had fallen from her husband's face. He made no effort to hide himself from her. She loved him, it is true, and she looked up to him, but there were times when she repented the day Hugh Swinyard came to study in the peace and quiet of her father's vicarage, and fell in love with her innocence—the pretty little gentle girl in a simple gown and unpretentious boots.

She fell in love with him because he was so kind and so thoughtful, so handsome, so charming and so clever, and because she could not help herself. Her only fault, if it can be called a fault, was that she let him see how quickly and completely she was his. But she could not help herself in that either. She was too natural to cloak or even subdue her feelings, modest though she was. She was happy then, and could only see happiness in store—he gradually rising and making a name by his pen, and she, as he told her, by his side, his

sweet influence to inspire and help him on. Ah! if we could only look into futurity a little. If it would not be better for men, it would most times for women. Edith was thinking something like this now, and trying to make Juan forget his thrashing by feeding him with the pick of the hashed mutton, when her husband unexpectedly reappeared.

"Edith," he said, "run and slip on a decent gown; we'll dine together at the Melroses'. They've asked us. I'll tell you all about it as we go along."

"But I don't know Mrs. Melrose," she said.

"Now, don't stand on ceremony, if you want to please me."

Obediently she got up. Juan leapt to the ground, and put Edith between them as she was crossing to the door.

"What's the matter?" asked Swinyard.

She was crying.

"Forgive me, Edith," he said, kissing her. "Cheer up, and—and don't let the Melroses see that you've been crying. Aren't—aren't you going to kiss me?"

She kissed him.

"There's a good girl. Now look sharp, dear, and dress. Put on your blue serge—you always look well in that. Juan! Juan!"

Juan sprang up to him. The dog forgave him as well.

III.

Poor little Mrs. Swinyard, ever industrious and studying economy, was at her needlework—she was, in fact, turning an old dress into a new one—when her husband returned home at an unusually early hour in the day.

"Oh, Hugh!" she said, "back so soon!"

"Have you seen Juan?" he asked.

"No —"

"I've lost him!"

"Hugh!"

Her arms fell. She stared at him.

"Where?" she asked.

"Where? How the deuce do I know where? If I knew where, I'd go and find him."

"I mean——"

"A fire broke out in the Strand. I lost him in the crowd."

There was a pause.

"Perhaps," said Edith, "he's been trampled to death."

"No, he hasn't," he said contemptuously.

"Perhaps he's found his way to the office. Have you been there?"

"Yes."

"Have you been——"

"I've been everywhere."

And so indeed he had. He had been to every place where he was in the habit of calling—shops, restaurants, clubs, post-offices, banks, etc.—between Ludgate Hill and Charing Cross Road. Mrs. Swinyard heard the news with a heavy heart, and found a temporary relief in a flood of tears. But these seemed to nerve her. She said that a reward must be advertised, and lost no time in going to the offices of the *Standard* newspaper, while Swinyard applied at Bow Street, Marlborough Street, and St. Bride's Police Stations.

The next day Edith went to the Dog's Home, while Swinyard made further inquiries closer at hand. When they met they both had the same story to tell—no tidings of Juan. The advertisement was unanswered. Mrs. Swinyard went to the Dog's Home every day for the first week, and every other day for the second. Then she gave it up as a bad job. So Juan, she thought, who was lost in the first instance, had either strayed far away, or was stolen, or had been trampled to death, or—but this was remote—had been cremated at Battersea.

It was about a week after this event had happened that Swinyard was burning the so-called midnight oil. His pen had fallen from his hand on to the manuscript and blotched it. He was staring blankly in front of him, absorbed in thought; he was thinking of Juan. His wife had gone to bed some time, and he felt lonely without his dog. He seemed to feel the loss of him more now than he did at first. He missed him mostly when he sat up late writing. If he halted in his work, he used to get up and play with the dog, and after a few

minutes the idea that he was looking for generally came to him. To-night he could not get on, and he could not get Juan out of his head. He had been cruel to him, and he was conscience-smitten. He sat lost in miserable thought of himself for more than an hour. Presently the train of thought arrived, as it were, at its proper station, and he passed a verdict upon himself. He got up and said aloud:

"But if I've been cruel to Juan, how much more cruel have I been to my wife! But no more. *No!* I'll turn over a new leaf, by God, I will!"

He came home early on the morrow, and accompanied Edith to Battersea. The day after he took her the rounds of the picture-galleries. He was very kind and soft-spoken and attentive. Edith remarked it to herself, and was happy. She did not remark it to him, for that would have seemed a reproach on his former conduct. He had begun to change already.

On the same evening he paused in his work; he looked up, and found his wife crying.

"What's the matter, Edith?"

"I was thinking about Juan," she said. "We don't hear of him, and I'm afraid he's lost for ever. The dreadful uncertainty of where he is and how he is being treated makes me so miserable. I'm so frightened he has fallen into the hands of some wicked man, for his name and address were on his collar. Somebody may be trying to teach him tricks to perform in public, and torturing him. They can't be keeping him back for a reward, for a reward has been offered. It would make me so much happier if I knew that he were dead."

"H'm!" grunted Swinyard, who had watched his wife attentively. "I daresay you won't believe me, Edith, but I feel the loss of Juan just as much as you do. I don't show it, but I do feel it. You have nothing to reproach yourself with; I have. I've thrashed the dog too severely when he's been at fault, and I've plagued him at times for no cause. It would be foolish to deny it to you. You have heard him cry out. I've been sorry for it afterwards; he always came and licked my hand."

"He had such a faithful heart."

"I think I must be a little mad—I can't understand myself. I do things that I don't know of

until they're done. I can't think whatever possesses me sometimes. I wish I might have Juan again. I'd make any sacrifice to get him back, and I'd treat him well to make up for the past. He should love his master for some good reason then. For, do you know, Edith, Juan has wrought a change in me. His loss has opened my eyes to the fact that I have not been the kindest of husbands to you. Juan has told me that I'm a brute, and—"

"No, no, Hugh; you have to work with your brain—"

"Don't excuse me, dear—" he was now kneeling by her side, with her hand in his—"don't excuse me. There is no excuse for a man who behaves badly and selfishly to such a true and perfect wife as you. I tell you, Edie, I don't know myself. I'm wrapped up in my work, and it makes me forgetful. I mean no harm. The least thing ruffles my temper. It's not as though you irritated me. You don't. On the contrary. I'm the irritable one. But I suppose it is part of a man's cowardly nature to behave the worst sometimes to the weakest and to those he loves best. I have been unkind to you, and I love you before the world. I have been unkind to Juan, and, upon my word, Edie, I love Juan next to you."

He had spoken rapidly. There was a break in his voice, and she made no pretence to check her tears. So Swinyard had something of a heart after all. He was a sensitive man, and there is always some good behind sensitiveness. Days passed, and he was changing, if he had not already changed. He was perhaps more "charming" (as so many people called him—who did not know him), he was perhaps more charming indoors now than out. He curbed his temper and he chose his words, and some of his acquaintances saw his "*better*" half for the first time in their lives.

IV.

Mr. and Mrs. Swinyard were at dinner.

"It is just a month to-day, Hugh," said Edith, "that we lost Juan."

Swinyard was on the point of replying, when they heard a ring at the outer door. It was fol-

lowed swiftly by the rushing in of Hewitt—Hewitt whom they had always been getting rid of and had never succeeded.

"It's Juan, sir! It's Juan, ma'am!"

But by this time Juan had announced himself. By this time he had jumped on his master's knee, and now he had two paws on the edge of the table and was alternately licking his master's face and lapping his master's soup. Then he ran across the table and tasted Mrs. Swinyard's dish. Then he went back to his first love; but Edith lifted him off and folded him in her arms, a proceeding which the foolish little fellow was somewhat inclined to resent.

"Who brought the dog?" asked Swinyard of Hewitt.

"The young man outside, sir."

They all went to interview the young man outside. His was a short story, and it must have been a genuine one. A policeman who had noticed Juan running about Covent Garden market had, only twenty minutes since, given him the dog to take home to the address on his collar. Swinyard asked him what he expected in return. The young man left it to his generosity, so Swinyard gave him five shillings—which the young man, if one might judge by his eyes, thought exceedingly liberal—and dismissed him.

"Isn't he fat, Hugh? I wonder where he's been all this time?"

"Somebody found him, no doubt, when I lost him, and stuck to him, I suppose. Now they have lost him."

"And we have found him! What a blessing they didn't take his collar off. But he must have been lost for some time. He's so dirty."

Edith Swinyard, who had most of the trouble of the dog and little of the love, prepared for him quite a Lord Mayor's banquet, and after dinner washed him with her own fair hands.

V.

"Edith!"

"Yes, dear."

"Come along, do. We shall lose the train."

"Mrs. Swinyard was in the kitchen getting Juan's

dinner ready. She had got rid of Hewitt at last, and Edith was maid of all work. Swinyard was walking the dining-room impatiently. They had been invited to the Crystal Palace to dine and see the fireworks. He was going in his journalistic capacity. Had they delayed another hour, they would have been in time for the fireworks, but Swinyard had no appetite for them. He wanted the dinner, which was a minor attraction to his wife. She wanted the fireworks.

"Edith!"

"Yes, dear."

He went into the kitchen.

"Are you coming?"

"I must give Juan something to eat, Hugh."

"Hang the dog! Leave that and come at once, or——"

"I'd rather go without my own dinner than leave Juan hungry."

"I daresay you would, but I wouldn't. . . . Get down!" this to the dog, who jumped up to him, thinking he was going to be taken out. "Look here, I'm not going to bear the expense of a cab to Victoria. If we don't start at once we shall lose our train, and—— Now, that'll do; come on!" He took her roughly by the arm and led her to the kitchen door. "Get in, Juan!" he commanded, "get in!"

But the dog ran along the passage. He went after it, caught it by the neck and flung it into the dining-room. He locked the door and put the key in his pocket.

"Now, Edith, get downstairs."

"I shan't go out until I've given Juan his dinner."

"Oh, you won't, won't you? Well, you shan't go out and you shan't give the dog his dinner;" and Swinyard left the house alone, with the key of the dining-room still in his pocket.

Edith's first impulse was to have a locksmith unpick the lock, but she thought that her husband might visit his displeasure on the dog, and she argued that a beating were worse than a temporary hunger, so she let it be and spent a good part of the evening talking to Juan through the door. Juan barked and scampered and tore about, whether for joy or whether raging at his imprisonment she did not know. Late in the evening she heard him coughing. At last all was still in the room.

"He's tired out," thought Edith, "and gone to sleep."

She went to bed. She tossed from side to side wakefully. She was unhappy about Juan. She heard her husband come in. It was past one.

He unlocked the dining-room door and entered. His foot struck against something on the floor. He picked it up. The moon shone in at the window and upon the manuscript in Swinyard's hand. It was torn and crumpled. Some leaves were scattered about the ground. A corner was deliberately broken off. He rapped out an oath and looked for Juan. There he was lying in the moonlight. He crept up to the dog and kicked it. But it uttered no cry of pain this time. Swinyard knelt down. Juan was cold and stiffening. The dog was dead, and he had kicked it! He found the pin which had fastened the leaves of his manuscript sticking in its throat.





OLD GENT (who has seen little boy put his penny in the slot) : "There's a good little fellow,"—
(boy commences to cry)—"But why these tears?"

BOY : "Boo-hoo—I fo'rt it was chochlits."

THE DEATH-BAND.

HOW FETLAR SAHIB WON HIS CASE.

By LOUIS TRACY.

“SALAAM, sahib ! Hum apne ghulam haïn !” This is the gratitude of the East—to tell a man that you are his slave. Yet Abdulla Khan never prayed to the Prophet with more fervour than he threw into those words, nor did he cast himself daily on his knees towards Mecca with such energy as he displayed when he met Fetlar Sahib on the steps of the court-house, and abased himself by trying to kiss the feet of the barrister who had saved his life. Good reason had Abdulla Khan to be thus demonstrative. Had it not been for the advocacy of the famous lawyer retained for his defence, he would now be listening to the decisive formula of the Indian judge, “Take him away and hang him,” instead of striving with true Mussulman dignity to conceal his delight at being free once more. But the appearance of his counsel at the main entrance to the courts broke down his pride of manner, and he humbled himself in the dust before the man to whom he owed his deliverance.

Fetlar Sahib bent and disengaged the native's hands from his ankles.

“Cease, Abdullah Khan,” he said. “Leave me, and avoid evil deeds henceforth.”

“Sahib,” whined the man at his feet, “she was my wife, and she wronged me. She died justly.”

“You are a jealous fool,” replied the Englishman somewhat scornfully. “You killed your wife because you saw red. She had done you no evil.”

Abdulla Khan had risen to his feet, but he bowed again deeply. “The sahib is wise, and who am I, his slave, to give back words to him ? But the sahib has saved me from the death of a dog ; and if the sahib is right, I have here that which will some day repay the debt I owe him.”

He drew forth from the folds of his turban a piece of linen rag, obviously soaked with blood,

and Mr. Fetlar's curiosity was aroused by the sight of the gruesome object.

“What is that ?” he said.

“It is the band of death,” answered Abdulla Khan, whose swarthy face became drawn and rigid, and whose eyes glistened with superstitious conviction as he gazed at the soiled rag. “I tore it from her *sari*,¹ and steeped it in the flowing blood as she died. It was the blood of her life, sahib, and it is now magic, great magic ! If she was innocent, then the man who lays this band upon his forehead and asks Allah to spare the life of another has his prayer granted, but dies himself and is admitted into Paradise. If she was guilty, Allah hears him not. He dies and is cast into hell !”

Abdulla Khan snapped his teeth as he rolled out the concluding sentence in the sonorous Arabic of the Kurān. It was a verse he had picked up from a *moullah*,² and was couched in the classical tongue which is now so unfamiliar even to the Persian-speaking peoples of India.

But the barrister he was addressing was a ripe Eastern scholar, and fully understood his meaning. Indeed, it was Mr. Fetlar's knowledge of the languages and habits of the East which had so well availed his client that day, and which served to secure him in the position he held, that of foremost criminal lawyer in the Punjab. Abdulla Khan had killed his wife because he believed her to be unfaithful to him. In so acting he was fulfilling the most sacred injunctions of his creed ; but the Government of India, whilst upholding every class of religious belief, draws the line at observances which include the murder of other people, and this is a statute of Mahomedan law which is not permitted by the Indian Penal Code. So

¹ The outer covering of an Indian woman.

² A Mahomedan priest.

Abdulla Khan was arrested and tried for murder, and he would infallibly have paid the penalty of his crime had not Mr. Fetlar shown, by a remarkably ingenious defence, that the woman had not been untrue to her connubial vows. This he demonstrated by proving conclusively that she could not have seen the man suspected to be her paramour at the times and places reported to her husband. The lawyer then put forward the proposition that she had taken her own life in a fit of passion at the unjust charge brought against her, and so worked upon the feelings, or intellectual subtleties, of the jury that they acquitted his client, to the intense amazement of everybody concerned, and of none more than Abdulla Khan himself.

Fetlar had, during the progress of the case, assured himself of the unfortunate woman's innocence, and, although he was elated with his professional success, a feeling of disgust now overpowered him as he looked at her slayer glowering at the linen stained with her blood.

"Stand aside," he said, in the tone that the natives have learned to obey in Anglo-India, and he walked across the carriage road to disrobe in the Bar Library.

But Abdulla Khan looked after his retreating form and muttered, "I am your honour's slave until I die."

Then he replaced the death-band in a tight fold of his turban.

* * * *

Abdulla Khan waxed fat and rich. He dealt in indigo, and there never were such yielding years. He speculated in shellac, and whilst the *neel* plants of his neighbours withered on their stalks his gum-trees prospered a main. He contracted for a three years' supply of "drugs" to a large district, and the people excelled all previous records in the consumption of bhang. But a great trouble had come into his life, a trouble that a lakh of rupees could not settle. His son, Muhammad Raza, although a devout follower of the Prophet, loved a Kashmiri woman—a Hindu, whose eyes were as the moon, and whose teeth as the pearls of the Karun river. It was useless for the elder man to tell the smitten youth that Kashmiris were false as

they were fair, and they parted in anger when Abdulla Khan said that the lovely Lakshmai was known to the sahib-lôg¹ of the garrison.

This sorely grieved the father, so when Muhammad Raza came to him and said that the Kashmiri was willing to become a Mahomedan for his sake, Abdulla Khan unwillingly relented, and the wedding took place. There were great festivities in the bazaar, and the fun was at its height when in an evil moment there came the man, now aged, poor, and decrepit, whom Abdulla Khan, at that long-forgotten crisis in his career, had suspected of making love to his wife.

The sight of him made Abdulla Khan forget the dignity of his position and the claims of hospitality. He spat over his beard and withdrew to a darkened chamber, cursing his unbidden guest and the Kashmiri woman whose advent to his house had caused this thing to happen. Then Muhammad Raza's brows darkened with anger because of his father's action at such a moment, so he went to the unoffending stranger and gave him a double portion of ghi and sweetmeats.

The months passed, and the time of the Muharram came, when, after long fasting, all true believers follow a *tehzia*, or imitation tomb, bravely decked out with gold and silver paper and ribands, which is carried in procession to the burying-ground, there to be broken in pieces as a symbol of the destruction of mortal life in its due course. This annual parade through the streets is one of the most brilliant and fascinating spectacles that even the gorgeous East can produce. It is a time of much anxiety to the authorities, as a religious feud may spring up in an instant between the two great sections of the people; but, for the most part, the Hindus participate with interest in the excitement of the Mussulman holiday, and help by their presence in the crowd to give life and animation to a scene full of dramatic vigour. All the able-bodied Mahomedans gather around the insignia of the particular family to which they are bound by domestic or social ties; and whilst a madly discordant band of musicians trumpet forth wild

¹ European officers.

fantasies on strange instruments, a knot of retainers precede the *tehzia*, borne aloft on a platform, and yell in unison "Hosain, Hosain," fiercely beating their naked breasts or brandishing the make-believe swords and spears which the Government of India allow them to carry for the purposes of display only.

Muhammad Raza was marching past his father's house with the crowd of retainers, when he chanced to look towards the grated balcony where sat the Kashmiri, with other Mahomedan ladies, to witness the procession. It must surely be fancy, but he thought she made a sign to one of a group of Englishmen who were watching the passing crowd from the other side of the bazaar. The sahib, too, seemed to gaze intently in her direction, so Muhammad Raza slipped from the midst of the moving mass and stood a little while beneath the shade of a great *pipal* tree. When the palpitating crowd had thinned a little, prior to the coming of another procession, he noticed an old *ayah*, whose low caste enabled her to pass unveiled through the streets, emerging from a side passage of the house and casually making her way towards the Feringhis.¹ And the sahib also saw her, for he drew a little apart from the others, whilst the beldame passed closely to him and as though to give him some muttered message.

Muhammad Raza plunged into the maelstrom of humanity beneath the balcony and strode away so that he could not be spied from the upper storey.

"By the faith of the Kurān," he growled in his rage, "my father, wisest among men, was right. The Kashmiri is the plaything of the Kaffir.² It is enough." Then he overtook the yelping mob with the *tehzia*, and shrieked "Hosain ! Hosain !" louder than them all, whilst he beat his breast until the bruised skin broke and the blood flowed.

* * * *

Mr. Fetlar was sitting with his daughter in the verandah of their bungalow. The European station at Lahore was spread before their eyes in level panorama, thickly wooded, laid out like a gigantic landscape garden, with the bright hues of an

occasional residence peeping through the foliage, and a tall spire lifting its graceful lines above the tree-tops. Dorothy's sweet face was flushed and animated. She had returned from the hills with her father earlier than is the custom among Anglo-Indian ladies, for the plains were still reeking after the first burst of the rains, and the earth was rotting and fertilising and steaming with noxious miasma. But Mr. Fetlar had been called home by urgent business, which he had barely dealt with when he had to decide two momentous questions.

The morning's post had brought him two letters —one from Captain Hubert Steele, of the Rifle Brigade, asking no less a gift than Dorothy herself, and the other from the Government of India, offering him a judgeship. He had been puzzled to know why Dorothy rose so hastily from the breakfast table when the letters arrived, but he knew the reason as soon as he had opened the missive which bore the crest of the Rifle Brigade. Before leaving the house for the High Court he called her to him and kissed her, without alluding to the contents of the letter—and in the Bar Library he was handed the official document.

And now, as the sun was sinking in all the magnificent glory of closing day during a break in the rains, father and daughter were seated together in a corner of the verandah discussing the long-expected events which were so novel when they happened.

"As you are going from me, Dolly," he said after a long pause, "I will take the judgeship."

"Why, dearest ? Hubert and I will live here, quite near you."

"Yes, until the regiment marches off to Rawalpindi next cold weather. It is no use, Dolly. You have given me notice to quit, so I will seek consolation in change of scene and occupation. The wrench must come, and I could not bear to live in this house without you."

Dorothy's eyes filled with tears, and she knelt by his side, flinging her arms around his neck. "Don't speak like that, father dear," she sobbed. "It makes me very miserable, and I want to be happy, not sorrowful. But I shall fret dreadfully if you say such things."

¹ Europeans.

² A Mahomedan term of opprobrium for a European.

He kissed her, and affected to be cheerful. "Nonsense, child," he cried. "My dignity on the bench will sustain me. Judges are not forbidden to play whist, though our present chief ought to be, as he never leads trumps from five, so what between upsetting the code during the day, and a quiet rubber at the club in an evening, I shall never miss you a bit. Hallo, what does my Mohammedan friend want?"

Miss Dorothy bounced back into her chair, to see an aged Mussulman bowing lowly before them from the circular roadway in front of the house. His costume bespoke him to be a man of consequence, and he addressed a long and earnest speech to her father, the drift of which she thought had reference to some case at the Courts. But Miss Fetlar understood very little of the native language, as Anglo-Indians never encourage their women-folk to learn the tongue of the people. Its idioms are fetched too directly from nature.

Her father was evidently refusing the request, whatever it was; and the distress of his petitioner, a remarkably fine-looking and dignified old gentleman, was so acute that Dorothy at last asked what it was all about.

"His son is charged with wife murder," said Mr. Fetlar, "and he wants me to undertake the defence. His chief concern is that if his son is hanged there will be no one left to do honour to his own remains, which is, of course, very sad, but which does not impress me very greatly."

The Mahomedan here looked at Miss Fetlar with such mute entreaty that she said,—

"Why won't you defend his son?"

"I absolutely cannot. The Government want me to take up this appointment forthwith."

"When is the trial?"

"To-morrow, I believe."

"Could you not deal with this case first, and then write accepting the offer of Government? It is a matter of three days' post anyhow, and a day more or less does not matter much, except to the poor old man there."

"Oh, well," said Mr. Fetlar, laughing, "if you appear for the prisoner, I must give in. Go to my office," he continued, addressing the native, who

was standing with his hands outstretched towards Dorothy. "But listen. What is your name?"

"Abdulla Khan, your honour's slave."

Mr. Fetlar gazed at him for a moment with surprised earnestness, and then said, "It is well, Go. That is the oddest thing I ever knew," he added, almost to himself.

"What is the oddest thing you ever knew, father?" said Dorothy.

He smiled as he replied, "That you should have wished me to help the old chap. But come, it is nearly time for dinner."

Mr. Fetlar secured a verdict of acquittal for Muhammad Raza, against whom there was only strong presumptive evidence. Lakshmai, the beautiful Kashmiri, had been found dead in the garden of her husband's house. She had been stabbed to the heart with a dagger which was identified as the property of Abdulla Khan, who could not possibly have committed the crime. But her face had also been mutilated by the nose being cut off, and, as this is the common form of punishment in the East for conjugal infidelity in a wife, suspicion was directed towards her husband. One other man beside the murderer knew how and when the deed was done. That man was a British cavalry officer, but he held his tongue, and during the rest of his career in India he never visited a bazaar unless compelled to do so by imperative duty. So it came to pass that Fetlar won his last case as an advocate, and he was about to enter his carriage at the close of a long and tiresome day, when, at the bottom of the court-house steps, he saw Abdulla Khan and his son waiting to thank him. The appearance of the younger man brought back with startling effect the memory of that long-forgotten scene when Abdulla Khan had stood there on such a day and under similar circumstances. Mr. Fetlar was on the point of advancing towards them, to say some kindly words to the father, when a *chaprassi*¹ from his own house rushed up with unwonted haste for a native, and handed him a note. Its contents were brief, and terribly unmistakable.

¹ Messenger.

"For God's sake," it ran, "come home at once. Dolly has got cholera.—Cameron."

Dr. Cameron was the civil surgeon, Fetlar's most intimate friend, and he would not have written in this strain concerning the girl whom he loved almost as his own child if her condition had not been grave unto hopelessness.

Poor Fetlar's face became ashen grey. He swept aside the natives who would have detained him, sprang into his carriage, and gave such orders to the coachman, that the horses were started off at a gallop.

"What evil news is this thou hast brought to the sahib?" demanded Abdulla Khan from the breathless chaprassi.

"The miss sahib is sick unto death," replied the man, "and the doctor sahib sent me with the chit. The doctor sahib was weeping, and when a sahib weeps a poor man must run quickly, or he will be undone."

Then Abdulla Khan straightened his form and turned to the west, where lay Mecca behind the setting sun. "Allah is Allah," he cried, "and Mahomet is his Prophet. It is the will of Allah, and I am the slave of Fetlar sahib. Behold, I obey!" and he bowed low to the cloud-banks of crimson and gold, whose lustrous glory hide from mortal ken the coffin of the high priest of Islam, suspended midway between heaven and earth.

The people round about gazed awe-stricken at the old man. "He has seen a vision," they murmured; and Muhammad Raza said to him anxiously, "Come, my father. Let us worship in the mosque, and return thanks for my deliverance."

Abdulla Khan turned to him with strangely shining eyes but dignified mien. "Farewell, my son," he said. "Go thou alone and do *pūja*. Honour my memory and forget not to respect the sahib and the fair flower his daughter. Herein fail not. Farewell!" He entered the carriage which was in waiting, and drove off in the direction of Mr. Fetlar's bungalow.

The distracted barrister had found Dr. Cameron trying to soothe the delirium of poor Dorothy, who was in the agonizing paroxysms which are the penultimate stage of the dread disease ending in

collapse and death. The doctor could but wring his hands in silent grief, for both men knew that there was no hope.

"Why did you not send for me sooner?" moaned Fetlar, and his friend whispered in reply that Dorothy had summoned him, but had given instructions that her father was not to be disturbed, as he was trying to save a life.

Then the strong stern man utterly broke down, and, kneeling by the bedside, yielded to uncontrolled grief. Thus the moments passed, whilst the doctor watched the slight girlish figure on the bed, and noted that she was becoming calmer. Anxiety mastered his emotion, and he was about to warn the other that the end was approaching, but something in the appearance of the patient restrained him. Still the minutes sped, and Dr. Cameron seemed now to be labouring under some growing excitement. At last he stooped and placed his hand on the shoulder of his companion, whose frame was convulsed with sobs.

"Fetlar," he whispered, with intense emotion. "Try and compose yourself. I do—really—believe—there is yet hope!"

In the fierce strain to which they were now subjected, neither heard the solemn tones of a verse from the Kurān which might have reached them from the gathering gloom without. In flowing Arabic it came—the pronouncement of the Prophet on the doom of frail womanhood, and the promise of retribution for outraged innocence. The chant ended, and in clear unfaltering accents there followed: "Thus is it written, O Allah, Master of men. I ask that it be fulfilled, for the words of the Prophet are the words of God."

But the spell-bound watchers in the room heard not, because their senses paid heed to nought but the fluttering of the soul in the feeble body of the girl whom they both loved. At last the doctor spoke again. "By heaven, Fetlar, she has passed the crisis. She is saved! You have witnessed a miracle!"

And they knew not what to think when they were told that the corpse of Abdulla Khan had been found in the verandah, with a piece of blood-stained linen laid on its forehead.



"Where's that son of yours, Mrs. Mulrany, that went to London?"

"Well, sir, they tell me as 'e's carrying all before him."

"Indeed! what is his profession?"

"'E's a waiter, sir."

THE BLUE ROOM,

By KENNETH GRAHAME.

THAT nature has her moments of sympathy with man has been noted often enough,—and generally as a new discovery ; to us, who had never known any other condition of things, it seemed entirely right and fitting that the wind sang and sobbed in the poplar tops, and, in the lulls of it, sudden spirts of rain spattered the already dusty roads, on that blusterous March day when Edward and I awaited, on the station platform, the arrival of the new tutor. Needless to say, this arrangement had been planned by an aunt, from some fond idea that our shy, innocent young natures would unfold themselves during the walk from the station, and that on the revelation of each other's more solid qualities that must then inevitably ensue, an enduring friendship springing from mutual respect might be firmly based. A pretty dream,—nothing more. For Edward, who foresaw that the brunt of tutorial oppression would have to be borne by him, was sulky, monosyllabic, and determined to be as negatively disagreeable as good manners would permit. It was therefore evident that I would have to be spokesman and purveyor of hollow civilities, and I was none the more amiable on that account ; all courtesies, welcomes, explanations and other court-chamberlain kind of business, being my special aversion. There was much of the tempestuous March weather in the hearts of both of us, as we sullenly glowered along the carriage-windows of the slackening train.

One is apt, however, to misjudge the special difficulties of a situation ; and the reception proved, after all, an easy and informal matter. In a trainful so uniformly bucolic, a tutor was readily recognisable ; and his portmanteau had been consigned

to the luggage-cart, and his person conveyed into the lane, before I had discharged one of my carefully considered sentences. I breathed more easily, and looking up at our new friend as we stepped out together, remembered that we had been counting on something altogether more arid, scholastic, and severe. A boyish eager face and a petulant *pince-nez*,—untidy hair,—a head of constant quick turns like a robin's, and a voice that kept breaking into alto,—these were all very strange and new, but not in the least terrible.

He proceeded jerkily through the village, with glances on this side and that ; and “Charming,” he broke out presently ; “quite too charming and delightful !”

I had not counted on this sort of thing, and glanced for help to Edward, who, hands in pockets, looked grimly down his nose. He had taken his line, and meant to stick to it.

Meantime our friend had made an imaginary spy-glass out of his fist, and was squinting through it at something I could not perceive. “What an exquisite bit !” he burst out ; “fifteenth century,—no,—yes it is !”

I began to feel puzzled, not to say alarmed. It reminded me of the butcher in the *Arabian Nights*, whose common joints, displayed on the shop-front, took to a startled public the resemblance of dismembered humanity. This man seemed to see the strangest things in our dull, familiar surroundings.

“Ah !” he broke out again, as we jogged on between hedgerows : “and that field now—backed by the downs—with the rain-cloud brooding over it,—that’s all David Cox—every bit of it !”

“That field belongs to Farmer Larkin,” I

explained politely, for of course he could not be expected to know. "I'll take you over to Farmer Cox's to-morrow, if he's a friend of yours ; but there's nothing to see there."

Edward, who was hanging sullenly behind, made a face at me, as if to say, "What sort of lunatic have we got here ?"

"It has the true pastoral character, this country of yours," went on our enthusiast : "with just that added touch in cottage and farmstead, relics of a bygone art, which makes our English landscape so divine, so unique !"

Really this grasshopper was becoming a burden. These familiar fields and farms, of which we knew every blade and stick, had done nothing that I knew of to be bespattered with adjectives in this way. I had never thought of them as divine, unique, or anything else. They were—well, they were just themselves, and there was an end of it. Despairingly I jogged Edward in the ribs, as a sign to start rational conversation, but he only grinned and continued obdurate.

"You can see the house now," I remarked presently ; "and that's Selina, chasing the donkey in the paddock. Or is it the donkey chasing Selina ? I can't quite make out ; but it's *them*, anyhow."

Needless to say, he exploded with a full charge of adjectives. "Exquisite !" he rapped out ; "so mellow and harmonious ! and so entirely in keeping !" (I could see from Edward's face that he was thinking who ought to be in keeping.) "Such possibilities of romance, now, in those old gables !"

"If you mean the garrets," I said, "there's a lot of old furniture in them; and one is generally full of apples ; and the bats get in sometimes, under the eaves, and flop about till we go up with hairbrushes and things and drive 'em out ; but there's nothing else in them that I know of."

"Oh, but there must be more than bats," he cried. "Don't tell me there are no ghosts. I shall be deeply disappointed if there aren't any ghosts."

I did not think it worth while to reply, feeling really unequal to this sort of conversation ; besides, we were nearing the house, when my task would be ended. Aunt Eliza met us at the door, and in the

cross-fire of adjectives that ensued—both of them talking at once, as grown-up folk have a habit of doing—we two slipped round to the back of the house, and speedily put several solid acres between us and civilization, for fear of being ordered in to tea in the drawing-room. By the time we returned, our new importation had gone up to dress for dinner, so till the morrow at least we were free of him.

Meanwhile the March wind, after dropping awhile at sundown, had been steadily increasing in volume ; and although I fell asleep at my usual hour, about midnight I was wakened by the stress and cry of it. In the bright moonlight, wind-swung branches tossed and swayed eerily across the blinds ; there was rumbling in chimneys, whistling in keyholes, and everywhere a clamour and a call. Sleep was out of the question, and, sitting up in bed, I looked round. Edward sat up too. "I was wondering when you were going to wake," he said. "It's no good trying to sleep through this. I vote we get up and do something."

"I'm game," I replied. "Let's play at being in a ship at sea" (the plaint of the old house under the buffeting wind suggested this, naturally) ; "and we can be wrecked on an island, or left on a raft, whichever you choose ; but I like an island best myself, because there's more things on it."

Edward on reflection negatived the idea. "It would make too much noise," he pointed out. "There's no fun playing at ships, unless you can make a jolly good row."

The door creaked, and a small figure in white slipped cautiously in. "Thought I heard you talking," said Charlotte. "We don't like it ; we're afraid—Selina too. She'll be here in a minute. She's putting on her new dressing-gown she's so proud of."

His arms round his knees, Edward cogitated deeply until Selina appeared, barefooted, and looking slim and tall in the new dressing-gown. Then, "Look here," he exclaimed ; "now we're all together, I vote we go and explore !"

"You're always wanting to explore," I said. "What on earth is there to explore for in this house ?"

"Biscuits!" said the inspired Edward.

"Hooray! Come on!" chimed in Harold, sitting up suddenly. He had been awake all the time, but had been shamming asleep, lest he should be fagged to do anything.

It was indeed a fact, as Edward had remembered, that our thoughtless elders occasionally left the biscuits out, a prize for the night-walking adventurer with nerves of steel.

Edward tumbled out of bed, and pulled a baggy old pair of knickerbockers over his bare shanks. Then he girt himself with a belt, into which he thrust, on the one side a large wooden pistol, on the other an old single-stick; and finally he donned a large slouch-hat—once an uncle's—that we used for playing Guy Fawkes and Charles-the-Second-up-a-tree in. Whatever the audience, Edward, if possible, always dressed for his parts with care and conscientiousness; while Harold and I, true Elizabethans, cared little about the mounting of the piece, so long as the real dramatic heart of it beat sound.

Our commander now enjoined on us a silence deep as the grave, reminding us that Aunt Eliza usually slept with an open door, past which we had to file.

"But we'll take the short cut through the Blue Room," said the thoughtful Selina.

"Of course," said Edward approvingly. "I forgot about that. Now then! You lead the way!"

The Blue Room had in prehistoric times been added to by taking in a superfluous passage, and so not only had the advantage of two doors, but enabled us to get to the head of the stairs without passing the chamber wherein our dragon-aunt lay couched. It was rarely occupied, except when a casual uncle came down for the night. We entered in noiseless file, the room being plunged in darkness, except for a bright strip of moonlight on the floor, across which we must pass for our exit. On this our leading lady chose to pause, seizing the opportunity to study the hang of her new dressing-gown. Greatly satisfied therewith, she proceeded, after the feminine fashion, to peacock and to pose, pacing an imaginary minuet down the moonlight with an invisible partner. This was too much

for Edward's histrionic instincts, and after a moment's pause he drew his single-stick, and with flourishes meet for the occasion, strode into the moonlight. A struggle ensued on approved lines, at the end of which Selina was stabbed slowly and with unction, and her corpse borne from the chamber by the ruthless cavalier. The rest of us rushed after in a clump, with capers and gesticulations of delight; the special charm of the performance lying in the necessity for its being carried out with the dumbest of dumb shows.

Once out on the dark landing, the noise of the storm without told us that we had exaggerated the necessity for silence; so, grasping the tails of each others' nightgowns, even as Alpine climbers rope themselves together in perilous places, we fared stoutly down the staircase-moraine, and across the grim glacier of the hall, to where a faint glimmer from the half-open door of the drawing-room beckoned to us like friendly hostel-lights. Entering, we found that our thrifless seniors had left the sound red heart of a fire, easily coaxed into a cheerful blaze; and biscuits—a plateful—smiled at us in an encouraging sort of way, together with the halves of a lemon, already once squeezed, but still suckable. The biscuits were righteously shared, the lemon segments passed from mouth to mouth; and as we squatted round the fire, its genial warmth consoling our unclad limbs, we realized that so many nocturnal perils had not been braved in vain.

"It's a funny thing," said Edward, as we chatted, "how I hate this room in the daytime. It always means having your face washed, and your hair brushed, and talking silly company talk. But tonight it's really quite jolly. Looks different, somehow."

"I never can make out," I said, "what people come here to tea for. They can have their own tea at home if they like—they're not poor people—with jam and things, and drink out of their saucer, and suck their fingers and enjoy themselves; but they come here from a long way off, and sit up straight with their feet off the bars of their chairs, and have one cup, and talk the same sort of stuff every time."

Selina sniffed disdainfully. "You don't know anything about it," she said. "In society you have to call on each other. It's the proper thing to do."

"Pooh! *you're* not in society," said Edward politely; "and, what's more, you never will be."

"Yes I shall, some day," retorted Selina; "but I shan't ask you to come and see me, so there!"

"Wouldn't come if you did," growled Edward.

"Well, you won't get the chance," rejoined our sister, claiming her right of the last word. There was no heat about these little amenities, which made up—as we understood it—the art of polite conversation.

"I don't like society people," put in Harold from the sofa, where he was sprawling at full length—a sight the daylight hours would have blushed to witness. "There were some of 'em here this afternoon, when you two had gone off to the station. Oh, and I found a dead mouse on the lawn, and I wanted to skin it, but I wasn't sure I knew how, by myself; and they came out into the garden, and patted my head—I wish people wouldn't do that—and one of 'em asked me to pick her a flower. Don't know why she couldn't pick it herself; but I said, 'All right, I will if you'll hold my mouse.' But she screamed, and threw it away; and Augustus (the cat) got it, and ran away with it. I believe it was really his mouse all the time, 'cos he had been looking about as if he had lost something, so I wasn't angry with *him*; but what did *she* want to throw away my mouse for?"

"You have to be careful with mice," reflected Edward; "they're such slippery things. Do you remember we were playing with a dead mouse once on the piano, and the mouse was Robinson Crusoe, and the piano was the island, and somehow Crusoe slipped down inside the island, into its works, and we couldn't get him out, though we tried rakes and all sorts of things, till the tuner came. And that wasn't till a week after, and then—"

Here Charlotte, who had been nodding solemnly, fell over into the fender; and we realized that the wind had dropped at last, and the house was lapped in a great stillness. Our vacant beds seemed to

be calling to us imperiously; and we were all glad when Edward gave the signal for retreat. At the top of the staircase Harold turned unexpectedly mutinous, insisting on his right to slide down the bannisters in a free country. Circumstances did not allow of argument; I suggested frog's-marching instead, and frog's-marched he accordingly was, the procession passing solemnly across the moonlit Blue Room, with Harold horizontal and limply submissive. Snug in bed at last, I was just slipping off into slumber when I heard Edward explode, with chuckle and snort.

"By Jove!" he said; "I forgot all about it. The new tutor's sleeping in the Blue Room!"

"Lucky he didn't wake up and catch us," I grunted drowsily; and both of us, without another thought on the matter, sank into well-earned repose.

Next morning we came down to breakfast braced to grapple with fresh adversity, but were surprised to find our garrulous friend of the previous day—he was late in making his appearance—strangely silent and (apparently) pre-occupied. Having polished off our porridge, we ran out to feed the rabbits, explaining to them that a beast of a tutor would prevent their enjoying so much of our society as formerly.

On returning to the house at the fated hour appointed for study, we were thunderstruck to see the station-cart disappearing down the drive, freighted with our new acquaintance. Aunt Eliza was brutally uncommunicative; but she was overheard to remark casually that she thought the man must be a lunatic. In this theory we were only too ready to concur, dismissing thereafter the whole matter from our minds.

Some weeks later it happened that Uncle Thomas, while paying us a flying visit, produced from his pocket a copy of the latest weekly, *Psyche: a Journal of the Unseen*; and proceeded laboriously to rid himself of much incomprehensible humour, apparently at our expense. We bore it patiently, with the forced grin demanded by convention, anxious to get at the source of inspiration, which, it presently appeared, lay in a paragraph circumstantially describing our modest and humdrum

habitation. "Case III," it began. "The following particulars were communicated by a young member of the Society, of undoubted probity and earnestness, and are a chronicle of actual and recent experience." A fairly accurate account of the house followed, with details that were unmistakable; but to this there succeeded a flood of meaningless drivel about apparitions, nightly visitants, and the like, writ in a manner betokening a disordered mind, coupled with a feeble imagina-

tion. The fellow was not even original. All the old material was there—the storm at night, the haunted chamber, the white lady, the murder re-enacted, and so on—already worn threadbare in many a Christmas Number. No one was able to make head or tail of the stuff, or of its connection with our quiet mansion; and yet Edward, who had always suspected the man, persisted in maintaining that our tutor of a brief span was, somehow or other, at the bottom of it.





"When Jones came into the profession he hadn't a shirt to his back, and now he has millions."
"What—shirts?"

ONLY A POSE.

By FRANCIS GRIBBLE.

IN writing a story with a moral, it is sometimes the better way to state the moral at the outset. Then any one who objects to the moral can avoid the story, and the author may escape reprobation. But the moral of this story is quite harmless, being merely to the effect that a little knowledge of foreign languages is a dangerous thing.

It is a truth with many illustrations, mostly frivolous. There was once a young man, for instance, who, having a little knowledge of Italian, endeavoured to intimate to the landlady of a village inn that he desired a light for his cigar. Wreathed with smiles, the landlady disappeared, returning quarter of an hour later to announce, in the language of signs, that a carriage and pair was at the door. It was in vain that the young man attempted to explain that a carriage and pair was not what he had demanded or required. The landlady resolutely refused to understand him, and he found that there was no course open to him but to jump into the carriage and drive to the nearest town to seek an interpreter, who might explain to the coachman that he did not need it.

That, however, is a foolish and trivial story. The case of Mervyn Monteith, who had a little knowledge of French, was far more serious. How serious it was he himself did not know until the end, and perhaps he did not fully grasp its gravity even then.

His first suspicion that the matter was one of any consequence at all was when his mother offered some remarks upon the subject. She had noticed that letters came for him from time to time from Paris—pretty little letters in a delicate feminine hand, written on coquettish rose-coloured paper. Her curiosity was excited, for she knew that Mervyn was engaged to be married to a nice English girl, and so she questioned him.

"Who is that French girl who is always writing to you, Mervyn?" she asked.

"Nobody in particular," he answered vaguely, "a girl I met when I was over in Paris."

"Put why do you correspond with her, Mervyn?" Mrs. Monteith persisted.

"Only to keep up my French," he said.

And though Mrs. Monteith did not believe him, upon the whole he spoke the truth.

His mother pressed him further.

"You are quite sure you are not in love with her?" she asked.

"Oh no!" he said; "it's only a pose with both of us. She promised to write to me so as to teach me French, and it's more interesting for both of us to pretend to be in love than to write about the weather and the topics of the day."

"But Ethel—what would Ethel think?"

"You needn't be frightened. Ethel knows all about it. I always show her the letters, and she laughs. She says she knows that I could never really fall in love in French, because I talk it so badly. Still perhaps you're right. I'm going to Paris next month, and after that I won't write to her any more."

So Mrs. Monteith's mind was much relieved, though this time Mervyn had only told her half the truth. For the letters which he had shown to Ethel were only the letters which he had received. If he had also shown her the letters which he had written, her view of the situation might have been somewhat different. For he expressed himself with less restraint than Aimée. And yet, when he said that this subsidiary love affair of his was "only a pose," he spoke the truth.

When he first went to Paris, indeed, it had been merely in order to amuse himself, and without any ulterior purpose of perfecting his knowledge of the

language spoken there. He had descended at an English hotel, and had amused himself in the usual way. That is to say, he began with the churches, the museums, and the picture-galleries, and afterwards found his way to more Bohemian resorts—to the Moulin Rouge, for instance, and the Bal Bullier, and the Chat Noir, and to Bruant's on the Boulevard Rochechouart, and to the *caveau* of the Soleil d'Or. At last one afternoon he met Aimée.

A man whom he had met at the hotel took him to see her.

"Come round to the English bar in the Rue de l'Isly and practise your French," the man said. "You'll find rather a nice girl there."

That was before he was engaged to Ethel, so that there was nothing to hinder Mervyn from taking an interest in as many nice girls as he chose. And Mademoiselle Aimée was a very nice girl, and the English bar proved to be a very nice place in which to spend a rainy afternoon. For there is a sort of inner bar there, something like the bar parlour of an English inn, furnished with a piano, on which Mademoiselle Aimée sometimes plays to please the more privileged *consommateurs*. She plays well, too, even Chopin's valses being included in her repertoire, and when she sings that pretty French song with the refrain,

"Encore un baiser veux-tu bien?"

"Un baiser qui n'engage à rien?"

it is hard not to take her at her word, and, in defiance of propriety, kiss her there and then.

Mervyn was very glad to know about the bar. He fell into the habit of going there daily for his *aperitif*. When he had nothing else to do, he would look in again later in the evening; for in Paris closing time is not till two o'clock a.m. And, as Aimée was pretty, it goes without saying that he made love to her.

This love-making ought by rights to have been a very harmless pastime. For Mervyn only sought amusement for his leisure hours, and Aimée liked him neither more nor less than she liked many other young Englishmen who had amused themselves similarly with her from time to time. "*Je vous aime beaucoup. Vous êtes très gentil.*" Those

were the most affectionate words he ever got her to say to him, and if she did sometimes let him walk home with her, and kiss her good-night on the doorstep, that was a privilege which he shared with several of Aimée's other friends.

Yet it was true, none the less, that Mervyn's little knowledge of foreign languages was a dangerous thing, for reasons which will presently appear.

In all flirtations it is a rule, as everybody knows, that the woman means more than she says, while the man says more than he means. But when the man flirts in a language in which he is only a smatterer this truth is doubly true. It is partly that in all tongues the language of adoration is the simplest, and therefore leaps most readily to the lips; but it is mainly that a man finds it hard to take himself quite seriously in a language that he only speaks with effort. He tends to talk as a man speaks his part in a comedy, without realising that the things he says have any bearing on his individual life. He really lives only in the language he is used to talk. The rest is by-play and extraneous matter.

So Mervyn Monteith played his comedy, and played it unsuccessfully. That is to say, the love which he so precipitately avowed was not returned.

Aimée got quite cross with him.

"Non, Monsieur Monteith, je ne vous aime pas," she said, when he complained of her indifference, and added, after a pause, *"Oh! que les hommes, sont ridicules!"*

He got up to go, declaring that he would wish her good-bye and leave Paris, and endeavour to forget her. In reality he had not the least intention of leaving Paris, but this seemed the dramatic thing for him to say.

She was coquette enough to stop him.

"Mais pourquoi?" she asked.

"Parce que vous ne m'aimez pas," he answered.

Then she relented a little.

"Au contraire," she said, *"je vous aime beaucoup. Vous êtes très gentil. Mais vous—peut-être vous m'aimez d'une autre façon."*

For the verb *aimer*, as everybody knows, means sometimes "to love" and sometimes merely "to like."

Mervyn Monteith understood the difference, and he resigned himself to accept the situation. The part of the hopeless suitor was not perhaps the part in the comedy which he would have chosen in preference to all the others. Yet, at least, it seemed a safe rôle to undertake—a rôle which could not possibly lead to complications, or end with the throwing of vitriol. And, at any rate, it supplied a satisfactory basis for the practice of conversational French.

He called her "*ma petite Aimée qui ne m'aime pas*"—a phrase which pleased him because it sounded like an epigram, and so seemed a proof of his progress in the language. And Aimée smiled sadly, supposing his emotion to be genuine, and pitying him.

Perhaps it was because of her pity that she promised to correspond with him, or perhaps it was only because his admiration flattered her. Probably her motives were a little mixed. Anyhow she promised.

Mervyn consulted her as to the proper formula with which to end a letter in the French language. "*Agrez l'assurance de ma considération distinguée*," would, of course, be too formal; "*En toute amitié*," seemed too curt. Might he say, "*Je vous embrasse affectueusement*?" She said he might. But not "*Je t'embrasse?*" No, at least not yet; some day, perhaps, if he came back to Paris, and she loved him. For she was always coquette enough to hold out the hope that she might love him some day.

So they parted, and Mervyn wrote Aimée many letters, first from Switzerland and Italy and afterwards from London. He wrote French a great deal better than he talked it, as is, indeed, the case with all of us who have only learnt French from books. Still, though he wrote correctly, he wrote with anxious effort, and, consequently, without any sense of personal responsibility for the things that he set down. That is to say, his letters were an exercise in composition, and not the natural outpouring of his heart; and, as he was not at all in love, it did not occur to him to look at Aimée's letters in any other light.

Yet he was faithful to the pose which he had

chosen, and the sustained note of hopeless melancholy made itself heard in every line. It would be—

"Oui, ma chère Aimée, je vous aime, et je vous aimerai toujours. Mais je sais bien que c'est inutile. Vous serez toujours ma petite Aimée qui ne m'aime pas."

Or else—

"Oh! que je suis misérable! Je suis ici sous le beau ciel d'Italie. Le temps est superbe, le paysage est d'une beauté incomparable. Mais rien ne me plaît, rien du tout, parce que vous n'êtes pas ici pour partager ma joie."

It was not very good French, perhaps, but it was better French than he talked, and he always composed it with care, verifying the genders from the dictionary as he went along. And—partly, perhaps, for that very reason that he referred so often to the dictionary—it never occurred to him that this sort of thing might be mistaken for the honest and deliberate utterance of the human soul. It was only a pose which he neither wished nor expected to be taken seriously.

Nor did his French pose interfere in any way with the natural life which he lived in his own language. That life continued, without let or hindrance, its independent way. So, in the course of a few months, Mervyn Monteith met Ethel Drake, and fell in love with her, and became engaged, and told her as much as he thought it would be safe to tell her about Aimée, for her amusement.

But, though she was amused, having a sense of humour and having heard a part of the story only, Ethel Drake presently inclined to Mrs. Monteith's view of the situation. Indeed, Mrs. Monteith had, rightly or wrongly, thought it her duty to tackle Ethel on the subject. So, at last, Ethel said—

"I know you're not in love with her, Mervyn. You don't know nearly enough French for that. Still, I think it would be nicer if you told her you were engaged."

And Mervyn promised that he would do so.

That, then, was how the story looked from Mervyn's point of view; but Aimée understood it otherwise. It never even dimly dawned on her that

the tongue a man was speaking could make a difference in his sincerity. On the contrary, sincerity was the great virtue with which she had always credited the Anglo-Saxon race. In that respect, at least, she believed them to be the superiors of Frenchmen, who paid so many compliments and meant so little by them. So that she actually believed herself to be the object of an honest adoration which would survive rejection and disdain.

"He loves me very much, Marie," she said to her friend the other barmaid, to whom she showed his letters. "It is a pity that I do not love him, too."

"Yes, it is a great pity," Marie answered. "It does not often happen to one to meet such a love as that. Are you not sorry for him, Aimée?"

"Yes, I am very sorry for him, Marie," Aimée answered. "I thought he would forget me, but it seems that he is still unhappy."

So Aimée pitied Mervyn, and pity, as we all know, is akin to love.

It is not strange, therefore, that as the months slipped by, and the passionate, pleading letters succeeded one another, Aimée's pity was gradually transformed to love. For there was nothing in those letters to indicate that they were merely exercises in French composition, wholly irrelevant to the real life of him who wrote them; and Aimée did only what many another girl would have done in building castles in the air upon their frail foundation.

She pictured this honest, faithful lover moving in the midst of pleasures and distractions of all kinds, and wherever he found himself still dwelling fondly on her memory. She pictured him sitting down, with his grammar and his dictionary in front of him, struggling to learn French properly, so that when he came again he might speak to her as he wished, and declare his love convincingly. She could not guess that it was just this constant need for the grammar and the dictionary that led him to write, with an untroubled conscience, the things he did not mean.

At last, one day, she said to Marie,—

"I love him now, Marie. I am sure of it. And

when he comes again I will give myself to him, and he shall do with me what he will."

Then she sat down and wrote to Mervyn. The letter breathed an affection at which her other letters had only darkly hinted.

"Why do you not make haste and come again to Paris?" she wrote. "I want very much to see you. This time, perhaps, you will no longer need to call me '*ma petite Aimée qui ne m'aime pas*.'"

This, and much more in the same strain, she wrote; but Mervyn never got the letter. At the time when it arrived he was at Dieppe, and a few days later he came on to Paris on his way to fulfil the promise which he had made to Ethel.

By rights he ought no doubt to have felt some tingling of shame in his ears when he walked into his old haunt in the Rue de l'Isly. But he felt none. For he had always kept his two selves quite distinct: the false self which he assumed in French, and the real self which belonged to him as an Englishman. The one, he felt, had no possible bearing on the other, and he had never stopped to wonder whether it might not be otherwise with Aimée. He had tried to imagine the scene that was to pass between them.

There would be, he supposed, a few minutes' rather piquant conversation. Aimée would reproach him playfully for having consoled himself so easily, and he would playfully complain that it was her unkindness which had made the consolation necessary. Then there would be a little interlude of sentiment which he and Aimée would both know to be unreal, while they both pretended that it was real; and then he would say something about his "last French lesson," and they would press each other's hands and say good-bye. Altogether, he thought, it would be a very pretty situation. So he entered boldly.

The proprietor and his wife and the two barmaids were just sitting down to dinner, according to their custom, at one of the tables in the outer bar. Aimée saw him at once and jumped up to greet him.

"*Viens donc*," she said, taking hold of his hand and leading him into the inner bar, where, if they

did not talk too loud, the others would not hear them.

"Ah! que je suis content de te voir," she cried as soon as they were comparatively alone.

She had not in the old times been accustomed to *tutoyer* him, but he was thinking of other things and did not perceive the change. He was, in fact, trying to fashion a suitable French sentence in which to tell her the news of his engagement to be married.

It was not quite so easy as he had thought it would be to tell her. The change in her manner to him was marked, and he could see that she was taking him more seriously than of old. How much more seriously he did not even dimly comprehend. But he knew that when a thing of that sort is waiting to be said, the sooner it is said the better. So he made haste to stammer out his tidings in the best French he could command.

At first Aimée thought she must have misunderstood him. It was so different a greeting from that which she had looked for. She made him repeat the words over to her slowly; and then, when their meaning was quite clear to her, her passionate French nature lost all power of self-control, and she cried aloud, without caring who might overhear her,—

"Mon Dieu! How you have lied to me! You wrote me all those letters; you swore to me that you loved me; and now you come back to me only to tell me of your marriage!"

She spoke so fast that Mervyn could not follow all the words, though the general sense of them was evident enough. He tried to justify himself with the excuse that sprang naturally in his mind.

"But you do not care," he said. "You never cared. You were always '*ma petite Aimée qui ne m'aime pas*!'"

He tried as he spoke to lay his hand caressingly

and, as it were, consolingly on hers. She shook it off with a passion which he had never seen any woman show before.

"*Val'en menteur;*" she cried, and so began a volley of reproaches and abuses which Mervyn only partly comprehended. And when she had finished she buried her face between her two hands and sobbed aloud.

A second time he tried to take her hand. For, remembering how very far from lovers they had been when last he left her, he could not believe that the outbreak was more than a passing fit of petulance, and he did not wish to part from her in anger. It would be so much better for his own peace of mind, he felt, that they should part good friends.

This time she did not answer him, but, with a quick and sudden movement, picked up a glass that was standing on the counter and dashed the contents of it into his face.

For an instant the thought of vitriol flashed through his mind, and he turned pale. He had an idea that French girls never threw anything but vitriol. Then, when he perceived that the alarm was false, he swore roundly and loudly in his native tongue, and the proprietor, and the proprietor's wife, and the other barmaid, and the waiter, who had watched the comedy from a distance, ran up, and all talked at once, taking Aimée's part; and Mervyn sullenly wiped the red wine from his face, though the stains of it were still on his collar and his shirt, and paid his reckoning without a word, and slunk out into the street, with the painful feeling that he was looking more ridiculous than he had ever looked before in all his life.

But he had learnt his lesson,—the lesson that a little knowledge of foreign languages is a dangerous thing, undermining a man's moral consciousness and continually tempting him to be insincere.



AN OLD SPORT.

AFTER ECLIPSE.

By GEORGE THIRDLY.

IT was verging upon midnight at a certain *café chantant* in the Rue Delacroix of the Faubourg St. Antoine. The wretched, sleepy waiter was going his slow round of the tables, collecting the coffee cups and glasses, whilst his master, the proprietor, was having a rather bad time of it in the far corner of the room where the singer and the dancer, who had been amusing his customers, stood listening with gloomy, wrathful faces to what appeared to them an extremely unsatisfactory explanation.

With the singer's anger there also mingled something of despair as he pulled nervously at his long moustaches, and stood frowning at his employer.

"Ah!" said the dancer, pirouetting round both of them, as though she were meditating an assault, and looking for a favourable point of attack; "have I then refused the most distinguished offers—the pressing invitations of the best houses in Paris, to come here and be cheated by a wretched little *polisson*, who begged me on his knees to save him, and who now dares to offer me a wretched franc as compensation for the brutalities of the wretched *canaille*, who see no difference between art and a fishwoman's *carmagnolle*?"

The young lady finished her objurgation with a good round oath, and flopping down upon the edge of the little stage burst into tears.

In spite of her coarseness, however, she deserved some pity, for the proffered franc which she had rejected with scorn, did in truth represent her only chance of bed and board for the next forty-eight hours at least.

The singer had magnanimously given up his own half of the only coin left in the exchequer on the strength of a few sous still remaining to him. He looked down at his fair colleague and flushed

angrily. Her vulgarity repelled him, but she was still a woman in distress, and appealed to his chivalry.

"This is bad—very bad!" he muttered; "if what you say is true, Chamotte, it was nothing less than a swindle for you to engage us. The cruelty to mademoiselle is hardly pardonable. Have you no resources—absolutely none?"

Chamotte drew his hand from his pocket and waved it round the room.

"The furniture belongs to the landlord," he said; "for my own part, I possess a few pounds of coffee, also of sugar, some brandy, and the liqueurs on the shelf. What do you desire? Help yourself!"

Paul Ramon followed Chamotte's gesture.

"For the coffee and the sugar *vêù*!" he said, snapping his fingers. "But one might do something with the liqueurs. What do you say, mademoiselle?"

Instead of replying, mademoiselle wiped her eyes on the hem of her very short skirt, got up, shook herself, picked up the franc she had flung from her in her wrath, and finally bounced out of the place.

Chamotte laughed, but Ramon looked still more distressed.

"I fear that mademoiselle has construed my words into an invitation to drink," he said; "what I really meant was that the liqueurs might perhaps be converted into money."

"Never mind, my boy! 'La Savatte' would not feel herself affronted by your question, whichever way she took it. She will do very well, believe me. But as to you—how shall it be?"

He approached Ramon familiarly, and attempted to hook his rather dirty finger into the singer's

coat, which was tightly buttoned across his chest. Ramon drew back rather haughtily.

"Ah! ah! We haven't forgotten the days of the Grand Opera, I see," sneered Chamotte. "Well, *mon cher*, a few glasses of absinthe would bring back the vision, perhaps, and transport you to the Paradise of Houris, where such as I never visit."

"I could perhaps dispose of a bottle," said Ramon, "for money."

"The money to buy bread and an omelette, heigh? Ah! ha! I think I see you! No visions in that dull fare! Well, take the stuff and go. If I am not good enough to talk to you——"

"You should be honest, Chamotte!"

"And you should be sober, Ramon!"

"Should have been, you mean. Conscience is always saying *that* whenever she can capture my reason. Between the two I am wretched. I must keep them apart if I am to have any peace."

"Nothing better than absinthe, then! An omelette might sit heavy if the cook did not know her business, and make a good stool for conscience to preach upon. Don't convert absinthe into omelettes!"

"Yet I could eat an omelette very well just now," returned Ramon thoughtfully; "the cup of coffee I had this morning has all the day long stimulated my hunger for something solid."

"Well, there is magic in this bottle," said Chamotte, turning round and handing it to him; "drink, and all your wants will be satisfied; your senses filled with ecstasy!"

"And the awaking? You never tell the deluded wretches how bitter that will be."

"There is always a remedy—drink again!" retorted Chamotte with a grimace.

Ramon's lodging was some distance off, in a gloomy bye-street. He was hungry, weary, and dispirited as he stumbled along, ready to drop with exhaustion. The *concierge* was savage and sleepy, and scolded him severely. He left her and crept upstairs by the light of some matches. Some poor workmen—bachelors—clubbed together in a room on the first landing; he had hoped to dispose of the absinthe amongst them, but knocked vainly at

the door which was locked. On the opposite side, the light was streaming through a wide chink, and the soft whirr of a sewing machine told him that the occupant of that apartment was awake and stretching her day's hard toil into the night.

"Just one look at you, my pure little Rose!" murmured the singer, approaching the door on tiptoe; "the dew of your native innocence is still left in your heart, in spite of the scorching suns of Paris; "it cools and revives me, only to see it welling up in your eyes!"

But the eyes were hidden from him as they bent over her work; he could only see the profile of a lovely little head rather sharply chiselled by fortitude and hunger. The poor fellow murmured a few words of prayer to the Blessed Mother, invoking her protection for his young neighbour, and shed tears of pity for her poverty, forgetting his own want in his solicitude for her.

"Well, there was a time when you had a splendid voice for bread-winner, a stainless record, and the brightest future. You might have helped her out of such a treasury; but you've squandered it, you sot!" That was what conscience told him. He smote her into silence with a muttered imprecation, and stole away to his own room, leaving Rose Lechef with her machine as the only voice of her solitude. Perhaps she had some reason to be thankful, after all.

The sight of her and of her patience had at least done Ramon good for the time. There was not a crust in the cupboard, as the candle he lit soon showed him, so he bravely set his teeth against the pangs of the gnawing hunger that was consuming him, drank a draught of water and lay down to sleep. The bottle of liqueur he left on the table, intending to negotiate it the following morning for a good breakfast.

A young moon was peeping into the room through the small, grimy panes of the window, over a bank of black clouds that kept shifting, alternately accumulating and dissolving. Ramon watched them lazily; they seemed to move with the slow panorama of events passing before his mental vision—the coarse, grotesque scenes in Chamotte's café; the miseries of the sordid

struggle for bread that absorbed him body and soul every day of his life ; visions of past success and happiness and triumph ; of the better self of that happy past full of hopes betrayed to shame by the vices he had allowed to fasten upon him ! That look at Rose had been like the touch of Ithuriel's spear ; his soul saw its hideousness by the light of her goodness. It cried again for the obscurity, and yet in its unworthiness worshipped and longed for fitness to that sweet saintliness.

And strangely through it all, he never lost sight of the bottle on the little table beneath the window. The moonbeams fell upon it and illumined its gay label, making the pale, bright liquid within to shine and sparkle with invitation. It was the only bright thing in the squalid little room. It offered Ramon the key of escape from his tortures, both physical and mental. He began to feel a cynical amusement at himself. As if *he* could retrieve the past ! As if there could be any hope for one so far gone from respectability—what idle dreaming ! Better submit to fate and take the only opiate that deadened the stings of "outrageous fortune." He was not going to be cheated by conscience into surrender to pain. There was no use in refining his senses that he might suffer the more ; they had better remain blunted as a safeguard against despair. The road to restoration was too painful for his weak, irresolute steps. It would be so much easier for him to drift down the slippery path on which his feet were set, into the grave that yawned below. The prizes of life were far out of his reach ; nobody would believe in him now ; even the love of women would pass him by ; they could only give him of their pity.

The hunger was more than he could bear. He rose from his bed and grasped the bottle.

The steady whirr of Rose's machine still went on at its utmost speed. It sounded to him now like the harsh, peremptory voice of Duty. Yes ! that was the reward of virtue ; ceaseless toil and scanty bread—with peace, perhaps, and certain advantages to be reaped in that dim, shadowy kingdom of God, whose reality Ramon did not very clearly apprehend ; he had given but scanty

thought to such matters. All that he understood was the fact that his social redemption was beyond hope, for he had gone too far into the depths, and had neither strength nor courage left to struggle upwards.

He uttered a growl of savage defiance, and seizing the bottle, struck off the neck. Groping to the cupboard in the corner, he found the one solitary footless glass, picked up from a dust-heap. He was athirst now for the stuff ; he made haste, poured it out, and raised it to his lips, but had scarcely tasted when he stopped drinking. He was conscious of some indefinable change in his surroundings ; something had happened, he knew not what. The machine in the next room had suddenly stopped. There was a scraping, scrambling sound as if some light piece of furniture had been dragged or pushed a short distance along bare boards ; then the dull thud of a fall that shook the floor, succeeded by silence.

Ramon stood a moment with the glass suspended between his fingers and listened. He had some manhood left : the fierce temptation was arrested by his fear for Rose ; it made his hand tremble. He took a mouthful of the liquor mechanically to steady himself, and leaving his own room on tiptoe went and put his ear close to the keyhole of the young girl's door. There was a light within, it streamed through every chink, only there was nothing to be heard. Of course the stillness might be easily accounted for, but following closely on these sounds, it seemed ominous to Ramon. He went back to his own room and put on some clothes, then returning, knocked softly at Rose's door. There was no answer, and he shook it gently, calling at the same time, in low tones,—

"Mademoiselle ! It is I, Ramon ; be not afraid ! Are you well ?"

The next moment he feared she would scream, and that he might have to answer awkward questions.

"She is doubtless asleep and I am a fool for my pains," he muttered, retreating slowly.

But the very poor do not burn lights to watch over their slumbers ; not when they are thrifty, at least. Ramon still felt troubled ; he paced up and

down the corridor in his stocking-feet to avoid making a noise, and then ventured to peep through a crack in one of the panels.

The bed was within the narrow line of his vision. He could see that it was not occupied. Through another chink he could command a sight of the machine. Some work still lay under the needle, but no one was near it.

Ramon knocked again, and with sudden determination lifted the latch. The door yielded, and he peeped in. A glance revealed the situation. Rose lay on the floor at the foot of the table ; she was evidently in a dead faint, and the light cane-seated chair which she had clutched instinctively to save herself had fallen over her feet. Ramon had a horrible fear of death. He dropped on his knee beside the lifeless form, and felt for the first time that in this young girl had centred his only contact with all that is pure and lovely. She had been precious to him like the neighbourhood of flowers, which were not his own, but whose perfume he had inhaled.

His first thought was to call assistance, but the next moment he felt how futile would be all efforts to enlist the sympathies of the selfish, sleepy concierge's wife at that time of night, and he knew of no other woman in the house to whom he could safely appeal, and there was no time to try.

Ramon laid the girl on the bed and endeavoured to remember all that it was proper to do in such cases. He loosed her dress at the throat, and found some water with which to sprinkle her face ; no other restoratives were at hand. He sat on the edge of the bed, and chafed the poor child's palms in a ferment of anxiety, noting with tender pity the lines of care on brow and cheek, the sharpened features ; all the many signs that told of suffering.

When her eyes opened at last, he started guiltily, as though he had been detected in a wrong action, and got up, peeping cautiously into Rose's face. She looked at him wonderingly, too weak and ill to blush or feel embarrassed. A happy thought struck Ramon. He fetched the bottle of absinthe and, mixing a little with water, gave her to drink. Rose swallowed at first eagerly and then stopped, making a little grimace of disgust.

"It is not nice," said Ramon with a deprecating laugh ; "but it will do you good, mademoiselle."

The liquor brought a faint tinge of colour into the wan cheeks. Ramon brightened at the sight, and pushed his advantage. There was bread on the table ; he cut a slice and made sops with the drink, entreating the girl to eat the morsels he put to her lips. The sight of the food revived his own hunger. He cut some more from the loaf and brought it to her.

"Will mademoiselle permit me to eat also ?" he said, blushing hotly. It seemed to him, even in his extremity, a mean thing to do, but he felt his strength failing him.

Rose could not speak yet ; she pushed the bread towards him. He ate in a shamefaced manner, and lingered till she was sufficiently restored to thank him and bid him "Good-night."

Ramon could not return to bed, but spent the hours till morning in restlessly pacing the room, plunged in gloomy, remorseful thought. Both brain and heart had received an unwonted stimulant. Here was an appeal to his manhood for help, and he could give no full response—hardly anything of what was needed. He felt shamed through all his being. The sense of what a poor, degraded, worthless wretch he actually was had been brought home to his inmost consciousness, as he had never felt it before. He had that night actually been obliged to beg and eat the bread of a frail, helpless girl, who had won it by inexpressible toil and pain ; he who was *her* natural helper and protector by virtue of his manhood ! To realize it now was torture.

As soon as he could, Ramon sold the remainder of the absinthe for a couple of francs. As he passed Rose's door he listened ; all was quiet. He went out, and told his tale to the caretaker and his wife, who merely stared and shrugged their shoulders.

"It is not our affair," they said ; "there is always something of the kind amongst the lodgers. We should have enough to do if we began to meddle. Speak to a priest ; he will send one of the good Sisters to her."

All that the woman would do was to go up to

Rose and make inquiries. Ramon left them sadly, and bought a little breakfast of hot coffee and rolls at a restaurant over the way. This he took upstairs, and knocked at Rose's door. The machine was already going, but rather feebly and haltingly. Ramon went in with a smile on his face, and laid out his little offering temptingly upon the table. Rose stood up blushing and trembling.

"Monsieur!" she faltered.

"Mademoiselle!" returned Ramon; "it is breakfast-time; that is all. As you are not very strong to-day, I thought you would permit me to bring what is necessary."

He stood looking at her humbly; a good-looking young fellow in spite of his pale, worn looks, and he had an honest winning way with him. Rose was too ill for coquetry; she felt that this was genuine kindness, and in her gratitude and surprise could find no words to thank him.

Ramon led her to a seat, and sat down himself. They looked across the little table at each other as innocently as two children, and then laughed a little.

"Come!" said Ramon at last, affecting to be very busy with the cups, whilst his eyes were full of tears; "the coffee gets cold; let us breakfast."

He ate himself and encouraged her.

"I supped at your expense last night; it is my turn now," he said.

He felt comforted for his previous humiliation, and the food cheered them both.

When he had disposed of the empty platters, Ramon went as usual to practise his songs at the house of a friend, a poor music-teacher, who lent him his piano, and had done him many a kindness. It was too early yet for pupils, so he volunteered to accompany Ramon whilst he sang, not the usual music-hall catches, but sweet, tender words of Béranger and Alfred de Musset set to good music. It was long since his friend had heard him to such advantage; his voice had got back some of its old melody. When the practice was over, the master turned round, and, pushing back his spectacles, looked at him critically, compassionately.

"That's too good for the cafés, Ramon! What a voice you've thrown away! With diligence and—

and a change of life you know, even now you might do something to retrieve the past. Can't you make a good resolution and stick to it?"

"Is there any hope for me?" returned Ramon, thrusting his hands into his pockets, and frowning moodily at the floor.

"You can get clean if you'll wash and keep away from the dirt," said the other testily; "then clean people will allow you to approach."

Ramon reddened and waved his hand.

"Let's take the washing for granted," he said; "how about bread?"

"Are you serious?"

"I mean what I say. Help me if you can."

"Well," said the master, looking at him doubtfully and hesitating; "would you join a chorus to begin with?"

"Opera?"

"Opera. And I might introduce you to a little teaching amongst the shopkeepers. People often come to me wishing their daughters to be taught singing. It would be a mutual advantage if we could work together. You will have your past reputation to go upon, if I can give security for your good conduct. Parents will require that."

"I should be infinitely grateful to you."

"Well, we shall see. Adieu for the present."

As Ramon walked back he was a surprise to himself. It seemed to him that he had been acting without any will of his own. He certainly had had no purpose in view when he started for his friend's house. Some outside power had suddenly spoken through him and compelled this pledge to a new life. A new-born feeling was stirring at his heart that made existence brighter, more interesting.

Rose looked better, stronger, when he saw her again, and met his eyes with a blush. Ramon was on the point of paying her a compliment, but instinctively refrained. She was so lonely and so poor! Even an empty phrase of gallantry might alarm her, and he wanted her to trust him. He took a seat near the open door, and looked as grave as if he had been her father.

"You are stronger, mademoiselle. But would it not be well to rest a little; you will get on all the better to-morrow."

"I must finish this ; the work is due at the shop. You have been very good to me, Monsieur Ramon ; how shall I thank you?"

"Oh, mademoiselle, for such a poor service ! It is nothing."

He stopped, stammering and feeling ashamed of his unreadiness. The language of gallantry was forbidden him by the circumstances, and the sight of the wan, sweet face moved him to a tenderness that he dared not show.

"For such a service you will allow me to do something in return ? For instance, I could repair that glove, monsieur, if you will spare it a moment."

"Pardon me," said Ramon firmly, ramming the gloves into his pocket with a frank smile at their hopeless condition. "It would tax your strength too much. Hercules couldn't have done it."

"A man ? Oh no ! But with patience one can repair the worst things !"

"And that virtue belongs to women, you would say ? It is true, Mademoiselle Rose ! Receive my homage."

He rose and bowed. The young girl had risen also, and reddened as though she suspected mockery. She was dusting a little crucifix that hung in an alcove, and furtively kissed the feet.

Ramon turned away quickly and left the room.

Rose continued feeble for many days after. That fainting fit had been the first warning of over-taxed strength. She needed help, and there was no one in the house to give it but Ramon ; indeed he grew to regard it as his exclusive privilege to guard her. It was a discipline that wrought his salvation. Love for her made him desire to help ; her purity compelled him to make and keep himself fit for contact with her ; her weakness made a motive for his own exertion ; it had appealed to his manhood fortunately, and rescued it from the midst of ruins before self-indulgence had quite stamped out the remaining spark of spiritual life.

No one interfered between them for weal or woe. Their mutual loneliness had made occasion for the new bond between them, and furnished its strength.

One day in spring these two had gone out together—Ramon to give a lesson, and Rose to fetch some work. There was a little time to spare, and they walked to the Champs Elysées, past the sumptuous church of the Madeleine. A wedding party was just leaving, and a little crowd had gathered. Rough, toil-worn faces softened with tender interest as they watched the pretty bride and her young groom. Rose with professional instinct scanned the dresses.

"Tulle over satin," she murmured ; "and how well the Marechal Niel roses blend with the cream tints !"

"Ah," said Ramon, smiling, "I was admiring the pink ones in the bride's cheeks, and her husband looks as if he would like to gather them ; he is impatient of the spectators—of *us*, mademoiselle !"

"Great bear that he is !" returned Rose, tossing her head.

"What ! When I am married that is precisely how I shall feel ; I, too, shall be jealous."

The girl glanced at him quickly, white to her ears. Ramon, who had been looking about him with a gay smile, felt her slight start of alarm. The smile faded away as he turned round, absorbed in her at once.

"What is it ?" he said, stooping over her ; "take my arm. Poor little one !"

He led her away, tenderly guarding her. His profound pity had broken down a certain ceremonious courtesy that he had always observed in their mutual intercourse lest he should alarm her modesty. Reverence for her pure innocence had always kept him timid.

When they reached the gardens Ramon put Rose into a seat, and stood by disconsolately watching her. A couple of nursemaids and their charges passed by, and glanced at them with a knowing little smile, as if they understood the situation perfectly. Ramon intercepted the look lest Rose should see it and feel disturbed, but it set him thinking. There was a tender question in his eyes as they again fell on the young girl, who for some reason or other would not meet them.

"Rose," said Ramon suddenly, slipping into the seat beside her.

"I am quite well, monsieur. Shall we go on?"

"Yes, but not in the old way," he answered, wilfully misunderstanding her. "Cannot we change that, Rose?"

"I cannot tell; what would you have?" said the young girl, startled by his change of manner.

"I want *you*. I desire to marry you, to take care of you always. It is true my past has been very different to yours, my little saint; but I think you may trust me for the future. Saints are pitiful, are they not?"

"Good men are!" returned Rose passionately; "and you are good—so good! I should be base to take advantage of it. You should not tempt

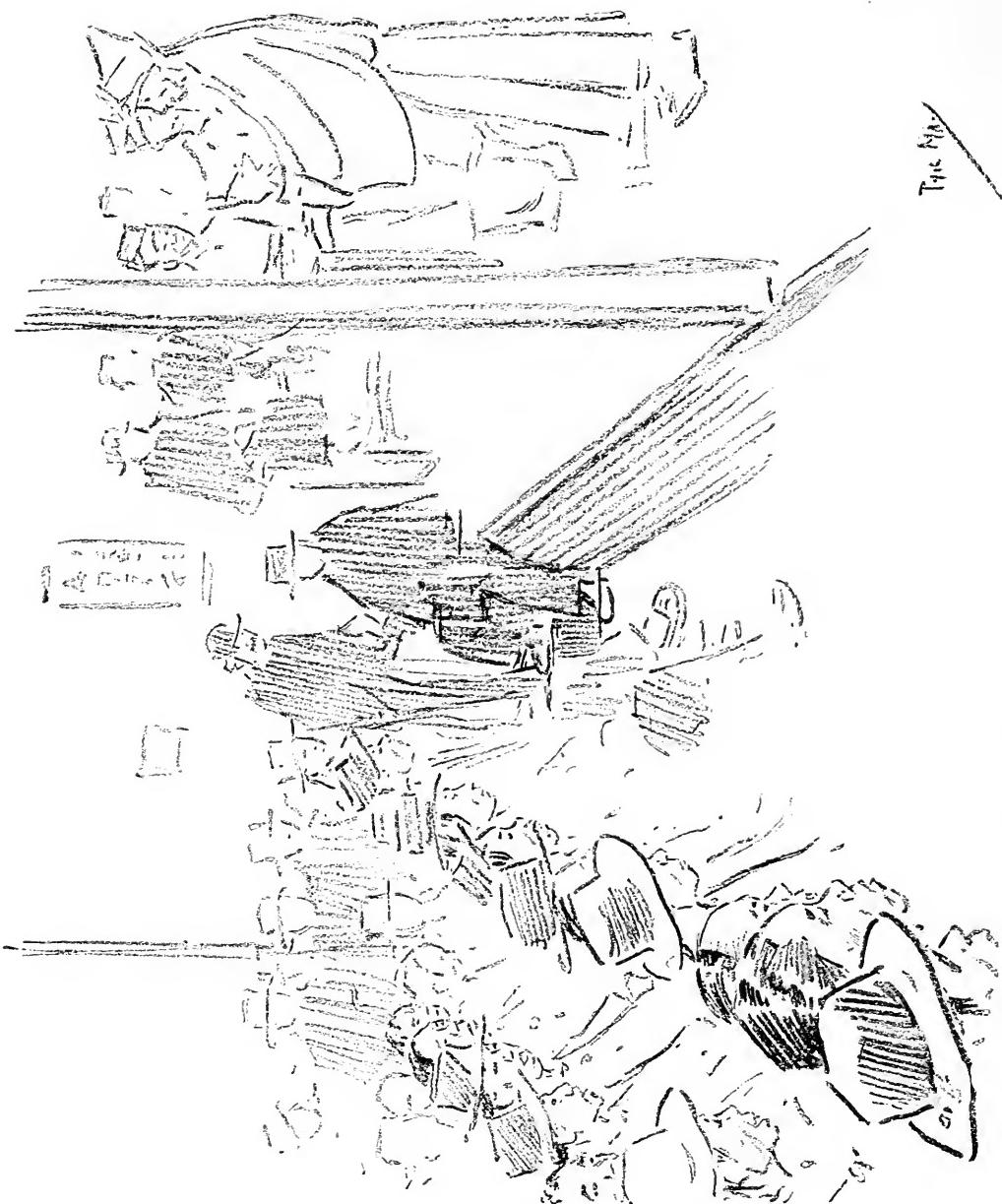
me, Monsieur Ramon; I was so lonely before you came!"

"That is good to hear, my friend. You will not send me away, then?" said Ramon, tenderly stealing his arm round her. "See now, our wedding shall be this very month—the Virgin's month of May. The saints have guarded you well, *pauvrette*. It was the pure light in your eyes that first kindled a new life in my soul. Look at me now, Rose."

The young girl obeyed. The light in her glance had warmed into fire. Strength and purity were united. In her heart she was accepting a solemn trust, and vowing her life to it. Neither of them could take their betrothal lightly. They drew together by a common impulse, and kissed each other gravely.



ROUGH SKETCH IN A CHINESE THEATRE



A GIRL WHO NEVER MARRIED.

By FREDERIC FENN.

THERE was once a girl who never married. True, there are many such ; she was not unique in this respect. According to statistics there are some 5,000,000 odd, but Mildred Grainger ought to have married, and no one knew this better than she did herself. Girls of course remain single from a variety of reasons. Some never fall in love ; some fall in love with the wrong people ; some never get noticed ; and some never have the chance to get noticed. But Mildred Grainger lacked no advantages. She was, if not pretty, certainly attractive ; she had many friends and intimate acquaintances, and was the daughter of a successful artist whose portraits contributed in no small measure to the general tedium of each year's Academy. Seymour Grainger was a successful man, and owed his success in no small measure to advertising, which in his case took the form of entertaining. On periodic evenings his Kensington house was overrun with possible patrons and their friends—with all the heroes and heroines of the hour, the rising men, the risen women, and Mildred was the friend of all. Fifty women said she was charming, with no reservations, and no men were there who had aught but good to say of her, either to their friends or among themselves in the smoking room. If one man only had fallen in love with her, a score would have followed suit ; but the one was wanting, and Mildred Grainger, with her frank ready comradeship, remained single.

None ever flirted with her. They flirted with the married women, the actresses, the pretty girls, and the ugly girls, all the girls in short whom they met at her house, except the hopelessly heavy, and Mildred was merely an onlooker, confidant, and friend.

And yet those much in request at these gather-

ings always found time for, and pleasure in, a chat with her ; while the newcomers who felt rather at sea relied on her to amuse them. They swam to her as they would to a buoy through a sea of strangers, and came away enthusiastic in their praises of her. But Mildred came to be twenty-five, and to look a little worn, and still no one had recognised her manifold potential virtues as a wife.

"And it has always puzzled me why," said little Bertie Dyer one night to a select party of friends, "because she is really a ripping good sort."

"That sort," said Greg, getting up from the sofa where he was lying full length, "does not marry."

"What sort?" said Bertie.

"The sort that hasn't any reservations ; she is too frank ; she is not manly, but she has something of a man's straightforward way of thinking. That's fatal to a girl, you know."

"Sort of puts her on a level with him," said Hilton, another of the few intimates who formed a little sort of club at Bertie's chambers.

"She'd be a loyal friend to anybody, but that's just the worst of it, for half the fellows she talks to would be much more likely to confide their love affairs than come it thick with her. Good sort all the same."

"Well," said little Bertie, "I think it's jolly hard lines on her. It must be pretty rough on a girl when every Johnny makes overtures, not of marriage, but sort of intimates that she'd make a very decent sort of extra sister—though wife? No thank you. She might not care to marry any one of them, but they might at least have the decency to make love to her."

Greg lounged across the room and stood with his back to the fire. "Bertie's right, but it wouldn't

do for you or Hilton, because she's not the sort of girl to fool with, and besides she'd laugh at any one of us ; even if we wanted to marry her, which I take it we don't."

And that was the odd thing about it. No one did, though not one knew a nicer girl.

CHAPTER II.

AND in the meantime, while her friends thus analysed her sorry condition, Mildred Grainger was falling in love. For aught publicly known to the contrary she might have been in love a score of times before ; but she was not a girl to give herself away, and not the most injudicious of her friends could have coupled her name with any other and smiled. This time, though, the thing was obvious to every one but the two people concerned. It was discussed a dozen times at Bertie's rooms, and though the general opinion was that she ought to have done better for herself, it was ultimately conceded by these halfway admirers that she might be happy.

Greg it was who first had his suspicions. She was chatting to him one night, when of a sudden the conversation stopped, and they found themselves watching a little group across the room. Three men were hanging round a little fluffy-headed woman. An actor, one of them ; another had white hair and an unpleasant smile ; the third was a boy, at least so he looked, a little over-dressed, fair, and fresh coloured. He was slipping in little remarks at intervals, and she was encouraging him to the exclusion of the others.

"Mrs. Jenner is enjoying herself?"

Miss Grainger pulled herself together, and with a slightly heightened colour, caused, it might be, by anger or anything else, answered him.

"What a pity it is!" she said.

"What is a pity?"

"Why, he is too good really for that sort of thing, only he thinks it the right thing to do."

"Do you mean young Denham?"

"And you are a friend of his? I should have thought you might have used a little influence with him."

"I do not know him. Besides even were he my friend he would resent my interference."

"I ought to remember," said Mildred, "that men only care to reform women."

Greg bit his lips, "And vice versa. He is your friend in your house talking to your—acquaintances. Don't you think it would be kind for you to try your hand?"

Mildred surveyed the scene another minute, and then turned slowly to Greg.

"I think," she said, "it would be kind of you if you were to open that window ; it might cool the room." And Greg had to go, with the germ of an idea which rapidly developed before him. But if he had been the first to observe, it was not long before others began to notice that Mildred Grainger had fallen in love. Herself so accustomed in her character of hostess to talk to whosoever might desire, without any question of attracting remark, it did not strike her now that there was any perceptible change in her manner when with Cyril Denham, which should draw attention to her ; but somehow or other subsequently whenever they met, and in a short time these meetings were not always left to chance, Cyril and she had much to say to each other.

"Tell me," she said one evening—they were standing in the balcony which ran along the back of the house, overlooking a London garden—"why do young men think that girls ought not to be sensible?"

"They don't think——"

"Oh, I know that!"

"They take them as they find them."

"Do they? How very good of them!"

"Oh come, Miss Grainger, you know what I mean well enough! Every pretty girl likes to talk nonsense, and so a fellow gets sort of into the way of talking rot and that sort of thing."

Miss Grainger was studying him, and seemed to see nothing worthy of reply.

"Of course you are different."

"Thank you."

He fidgeted a little. "I expect they'd feel rather afraid of being made game of with you."

Miss Grainger smiled a little. "That must be very nice for me."

"Well, it is you know really, because every one thinks such a jolly lot of you. Before I knew you I used to be awfully afraid of you."

"I think," she interposed, "we are showing that I am only one of the majority after all."

"Why do you say that?"

"I mean we have got to the end of our conversation."

"You mean I'm talking rot, Miss Grainger."

"I did not say that."

He was sensitive enough in his way, with a truer admiration for her than she appreciated.

He pulled himself up short. "I am sorry"; he held out his hand, "but never mind, I am going now."

Miss Grainger did not think fit to encourage anything savouring of posing, so took no notice. He was only a boy. He bowed rather dramatically and went.

CHAPTER III.

IT was Mildred Grainger who after this asked him to call, and her note gave him an easy exit to a situation which he did not quite understand how to escape from.

"You know, Miss Grainger," he said, when she was thanking him warmly for the mass of flowers which some happy impulse had prompted him to bring, "I have been an awful fool,—most fellows are, I suppose, at some time or other,—and thought that flirting with girls that it was easy to flirt with, and going it a bit, was the only way to gain experience worth having."

She put down the flowers impatiently. "There! Now you've spoilt it all."

"What have I done?"

"Why must you always be thinking about flirting?"

"I supposed that was what girls liked."

"If you had not brought me those," she said, "I should want to shake you."

"Well, I am in luck for once, that's all."

She gathered up the flowers leisurely.

"Don't they really like it?"

"No, they don't."

"How do you know?"

For a minute she did not know, and had no answer for him.

"How do you know?" he repeated.

"I don't know," she said.

"I suppose I do flirt. My sister used to tell me so. She had such funny ideas; she used to say that no man when he wants to marry a girl ought to have to hash up stale phrases."

She turned from fingering the roses.

"Would you like to have to find me a man like that?"

"I'm bothered if I should."

"Have you more than one sister?"

"No."

"I should think she is a nice girl. Why don't you ever bring her here?"

"She died, Miss Grainger, before I ever knew you."

"It sounds so silly to say, but I am so sorry."

"It is not silly," he said, "but put down those flowers and come into the garden."

Cyril Denham had leisure and means, so the intimacy progressed rapidly. He regarded Mildred with very mingled feelings. He admired her firstly, "but she's not the sort of girl," he confided to Bertie Dyer, "to ever give any one a moment's anxiety, and that's a pretty sure test as to whether a fellow's far gone or not." Bertie had been trying for a whole evening to extract information from him for the delectation of his little circle.

"Greg's right; that sort doesn't marry," said Hilton, when it was duly reported. "What have you fellows got to say now?"

Greg swung himself across the room to the hearthrug. He always enunciated his views standing.

"She has done Denham a world of good; he's beginning to lead quite a respectable life, but I suppose she'll have to pay for it."

"Well, I call it a damned shame," said Bertie, "that he should flirt with her if he doesn't mean to marry her."

"And yet not so long since, you were pitying her because no one did flirt with her."

"Oh, Lord ! so I was ; but I did not mean an inexperienced idiot like Cyril."

In the meantime the inexperienced idiot began to feel a certain pity for his new friend, and pondered in his own mind how far her views were the result of experience or lack of experience. Certainly her influence on him was entirely for good ; he took a more serious interest in life, and the thought of her was sufficient to keep him from squandering time and money on disreputable objects. Without believing it some chance remark of hers remained with him, about no man being able to have two manners : "I see so many people and such funny people too, some of them, that I have better opportunities than the majority for observing ; but if a man leads a double life, it is only a question of time before one day he betrays himself."

Cyril was not of that minority who needs must love the highest when they see it. Like a far greater number, he required educating up to that height of appreciation, but Mildred was educating him very successfully. His attentions to her were not marked, but they always showed an intimate study of her views, and if he sent her a little present or a note, it always seemed to insinuate itself in at some peculiarly happy moment when she was depressed or worried ; and the delicate flattery of being remembered at unexpected times was to her very agreeable.

"You always seem to know so well what I like," she said once, surprised into an unguarded gratitudo.

"That is my saving grace ; I know what I like, and it is what you like. Don't you think I am improving ?"

"I think you would be quite a nice boy if you were not so intolerably conceited." And though she talked lightly, there was that in her voice which pleased Cyril, who dearly loved appreciation.

But except for such little glimmerings as this, the shocking lack of sentiment about the intercourse puzzled and depressed all the onlookers. They met in public, and showed a decided preference for each

other's society, while Denham was a frequent caller at the house ; still the only fact which people not in the know could lay hold of was that Mildred grew to look younger.

A winter passed away, and it came to be spring, and then Denham—who, by this time, had wholly given up hinting at the black deeds which his past concealed, and which cast shadows on to his future—took to absenting himself. Then the girl who never flirted was fain to confess to herself that it made a difference. Why could not she not have confined herself to her first simple, and laudable intention of reforming a foolish boy ? With so little encouragement she had fallen in love, and had only just discovered the fact. However, strong in her confidence that none knew her secret, she played her part with all her old readiness and resource.

Denham wrote to her occasionally ; he was staying in the country with his people ; when he came back to town he should take an early opportunity of calling ; he "hoped she was well and jolly."

"Jolly !" She put down this last letter, and looked before her with that little air of melancholy which she never wore but in private.

"I don't think 'jolly' is quite the word," she said, "but still I have nothing to complain about. If I do stupid things, I must put up with the consequences. And yet he writes to me !" She read the boyish note again—it was like him ; not like him as she first knew him, when he used to wear an incongruously rouéish air which went ill with his youthfulness,—and yet the wording of the note jarred on her as never a line from him had done before. Had he studied her before when writing, or had it all been chance ? Why was it that always before his notes had seemed designed for her moods ? She stared at the few lines absent-mindedly, then rose hastily. "I am getting driveling ; I don't know what is coming to me."

She tore up the letter fiercely, dropped the pieces into the waste-paper basket, then sat down by it and burst into tears.

CHAPTER IV.

AFTER this the affair began to tell on Mildred, and she was glad when the time came for them to go to the house up the river which Seymour Grainger had taken.

Greg had noticed the change in her. "That's the worst of those girls who don't get married," he said ; "they begin to go off so soon and look worried. Why couldn't she have married that chap ?"

"I daresay she chucked him," said Hilton, "and that's why we haven't seen him about lately."

"Chucked him !" Greg contemptuously looked down on the little group of listeners. "If you want my opinion —"

"Well, we don't," said Bertie Dyer. "You are all a jolly sight too ready to gas about Miss Grainger. What is it to do with us?"

"Shut up, Bertie," said Hilton, "and let's hear."

"I was only about to say that in my opinion Cyril was having a sort of rehearsal ; he's gone away now to try how he gets on without her."

It was Bertie Dyer, though, who first had any news, because the next day he met the absentee, who, looking well, happy and brown, immaculately dressed, and seemingly in the best of health and spirits, clapped him on the shoulder in Bond Street.

Dyer turned round, a little annoyed, but interest overcame anger.

"You seem in a deuce of a hurry," he said, after exchanging greetings ; "come and have lunch at the club."

"Can't, old chap ; I am just off to catch the 4.50. I am going down to Henley to spend the week with the Graingers."

"It's all right, you fellows," said Bertie that evening, when first one and then another dropped in to his rooms to discuss things in general. "He's come back and gone down to Henley : midsummer—punting, canoeing—helping her in and out—like to be doing it for ever and ever—moonlight strolls by the river—oh, two days at the most, and if he were St. Anthony himself it would be all over with him !"

CHAPTER V.

IT was the last day of Denham's visit to the Grangers. The house party had dwindled away, and all the mild excitements of regatta-time had dissipated themselves. Denham had been enjoying himself—about that there was no doubt ; so had Mildred too, for that matter. In his society she both looked and seemed years younger. Now, at least, even if only for a day or an hour, she could abandon herself frankly to pleasure, and not be troubled by the obligations of a hostess, or be forced to study what onlookers might say.

A punt came lazily down the stream, and sidled along under the wall, where the garden ran down to the river. Denham, even more boyish-looking in his flannels, helped Mildred on to the bank, and then stood watching her.

She made a movement to go. "Don't go, Miss Grainger."

There was question in her hesitating return. Had he anything to say ?

He wanted to talk to her, oh, about a lot of things. For a week he had seen her, but in a crowd merely. She surely had nothing to do now.

Mildred shook her head.

He moored the punt and was beside her in a minute.

A little shiver of anticipation went through her. She knew she had given her love before it was asked, but as he stood before her she gloried in her unwomanliness.

"I have been so enjoying myself, that I have never had a minute to talk to you seriously ; now, shall I bore you ?"

She would have listened till morning gladly. She sat down in a garden chair, and he flung himself on the ground and looked across the water.

"When you first knew me, ever since you have known me, you have always been awfully good to me."

"Don't !"

"Yes, but you have, and I have appreciated it ; now I want you to congratulate me. I am going to be married."

She scarcely moved, but there was less firmness in her pose.

"Tell me more."

"She is a girl I have known some years—Ethel Draycott."

"And you love her?"

"Yes, I love her; I know it now."

"And when did you know it?"

"I think when I first met you."

Miss Grainger drew herself together and shivered.

"We had quarrelled. She did not like my ways of going on: we decided to part, and then somehow I got tired of my way. I think perhaps you must have made me think differently; but, anyway, I thought over what you said the other day, and I went down home and asked her to give me another chance. So you see it has been your doing all through, and I am grateful to you."

"And she said she would give you the chance?"

"We are to be married next month."

"She is such a good girl," he went on, "such a jolly girl!" Mildred winced at the adjective, and thought of her letter. "You do not know how happy it has made me; and all the time I have been away I have wanted to tell you. I would not spoil it by telling you in a letter; but you have always been, as I have said to her, just like the nicest and best of sisters; and I have not got a sister, and I wanted you to know first."

She tried to blind herself to his perfections in her

eyes, tried to answer him rationally, and be what he imagined her, but no words would come.

"I am afraid I know what you think: that this is merely my latest flirtation, that no really nice girl would marry me, possibly that I ought not even to ask a good girl to marry me, but when you see Ethel you will understand. May I bring her here?"

A little smothered gasp brought him to his senses. "Don't, Cyril—please don't talk to me!"

He turned shortly on her—"Miss Grainger! What is the matter?" and caught her hand. She turned to go, but the dear detaining hold kept her near, so with hanging head she waited.

"What do you mean?"

She raised her head at length, and met his young bewildered stare with her eyes. Their eloquence, her heightened colour, he was too fresh from love-making to misunderstand.

"Oh, Goodness!" he managed to stammer out, and there was a long silence.

"You must forgive me, Miss Grainger. How could I guess?" he said, at length, and then with a touch of his old staginess, raised the hand he still held to his lips, crossed the lawn, and was gone.

EPILOGUE.

It all leaked out in time, and then Mildred had three more offers of marriage, but she neither became Mrs. Greg, nor Mrs. Hilton, nor Mrs. Dyer, for that sort, as Greg still maintains, does not get married.





A WET DAY AT THE SEASIDE.

"Nice shower after the wet, yer 'oner."



"You shouldn't drink sea water, Tommy ; it will make you so thirsty."
"Never mind, Daddy ; there's plenty more."

TWO ONES.

By MARY L. PENDERED.

"Insist on yourself; never imitate."—*Emerson*.

IT was only a critique, but it struck her between the eyes like a flash of lightning, and for a minute she could hardly see. As if a positive suggestion from outside, leaping towards a negative thought within her, had struck between them the spark of consciousness, and the force of its resistance stunned her.

This was the positive suggestion.

"In Miss Methven's book we find much that is admirable, and a true sense of proportion. The characters are drawn with an unerring hand, and the surrounding circumstances effectively handled. But it is in no sense an original book. The whole story borrows too much from current *opinionata*. By turns we find evidences of all our best authors working through the mass, and, above all—Pennant. There is Pennant in the characterization, in the construction, in the whole scheme, most of all in the dialogue. The pithy, trenchant sentence, the meaning in a nutshell, the almost crude terseness of diction, are Pennant's, and Pennant's only. Enthusiast as the authoress is for the works of this man (whom some have called our greatest living author), the which she betrays in a conversation between hero and heroine, she has condescended to a kind of literary prostitution to his genius; so that whatever talent she possesses is subordinated by his influence. The promise of her first book is not fulfilled, therefore; she has only attained a nebulous success."

The paper lay at Judith Methven's feet, and she gazed blankly out of her window at the dingy balcony of a window opposite. It was a dreary view.

"A nebulous success"—that I am only a shadow. Yes, it is quite true; I have felt it, though I dared not own it to myself. I am no longer Judith

Methven, a *person*, but a *shadow*, following the footsteps of my master—a ghost of a self—not real, not capable of an idea—still less of knocking out an idea in form. Oh, how horrible, horrible!"

As she got up and paced the room, there was a look on her striking face almost demoniac in its intensity of horror.

It was as if some one had told her that she did not live, that she was only dreaming. And she loved life!

"Why did he cross my path? Why should he have that baleful influence over me?" she demanded and re-demanded of herself. "It was enough to make me love him, without sapping the very juice out of my life! I used to have thoughts, ideas, original conceptions of my own, but now—where are they? Gone, swallowed up in his great personality, as many flies are swallowed by trout; and he is none the better, only I the worse. Is it intentional on his part? No; he admires talent—talent. How I loath the word! How much better, except for mere money-getting, is talent than mediocrity? And I was fool enough once to think I had genius! How I dreamed and dreamed, conceived and planned, longed and panted, lying all night hating to sleep, and trying to work out in my brain a scheme whereby my glorious, my own inborn ideas, might see the light! How I lived for that, and that only, till he came. My God! can it be true that I am swamped and drowned in him? I had it—the *making* power—yes, I had it; but now—do I make anything, or only borrow?"

These thoughts flew through her mind like a flight of frightened birds, in such a rush and swirl, she had to stay them, and hold her head with both hands.

Then, with the strength of a great desperation, she swiftly decided upon immediate action. That night found her in the presence of her lover, Michael Pennant. At first he could not understand her incoherent flow of excited words, and even after she had shown him the review that had disturbed her he was prone not to take her in earnest.

"Do you mean to tell me you let the words—the probably unstable opinion of one unknown critic—upset you like this?" he said. "Judith, I thought you had more balance."

"It is not only the man who has shaken me, Michael; don't you see? I know his words are true. I have felt their truth—ever since I have known you."

"Well?"

"I will be myself—I will. You shall not asphyxiate me."

"Dear heart! I don't want to 'asphyxiate' you, except it be in my arms. Aren't you rather hysterical?"

"You may jest. The joke is all on your side. To me it is deadly earnest—it is *death*! I must have a self."

"You have the sweetest self in the world. Your self rules every action of my life."

"I do not rule the ideas of your mind."

"You do, I think. Wait till my next book comes out, and you will probably find some bilious critic accusing me of plagiarising from Judith Methven."

"Absurd! You know that can never be. If one thought so, he would never dare to state it."

Pennant was silent. There was truth in what she said.

"What do you want?" he asked slowly.

"I want to be free," she said below her breath.

He looked at her with an air of abstraction. "What unspeakable problems you women are!" he said. "You want to be free! And once, not so long ago, you said you loved me, that you would give up the whole world for me."

"And so I would still—everything but *that*."

"But *that*—what is *that*?"

"Myself, my individuality. I can't be merged,

Michael. That may be best for some women, but not for me. I never saw the danger, but now that I do see it I know I must keep—an ego."

He was a man of few words on great occasions. "Are you sure you are quite serious, and not—unwell?" he asked.

"I am in earnest. I must be free. It may break my heart—but—I must fulfil my destiny."

"Then our contract is annulled. Luckily we are not married, although, indeed, I have felt as if I were. This is to be the end of *we two* and the beginning of *two ones* again, then. Remember I can't forgive you, any more than I can understand you. But I hold no woman against her will. You want to go?"

"Yes," she whispered.

"Then good-bye." He took up his hat.

"We part friends?" she said, with a sob.

"Certainly not. Lovers or nothing. If you care more for your career than for me, I have no protest to enter. I can only bow, and wish you all success. Good-bye."

Before she could speak again, he was gone.

And then she knew what loneliness meant.

He went out and walked till he could walk no longer. Then he wrote for several hours, and tore up all that he had written afterwards. By that time it was morning, and he rang for coffee. He was frightfully hungry! And the same day he went to Paris, *en route* for a further tour.

CHAPTER II.

"Never happy any more,
Put the light out, shut the door."—*Rossetti*.

JUDITH METHVEN'S third book was a literary success, which is saying that all the reviews praised it. As they were sent to her, one by one, she braced herself up, as usual, to meet attacks, but did not find even one critic to challenge her originality, or find faults in her diction. There were writers who said the book would not live, that it was too morbidly modern, that it would never become popular, and that it was essentially a woman's novel for women. But all gave a more or less hearty verdict of power, both in construction

and ideality, and she soon began to receive that adulation so dear to little souls, so dreaded by great ones.

Looking back on her months of travail, she felt somewhat as if "The Higher Light," as she had called it, were a changeling. She scarcely knew or loved it as a child of her own. Yet the making had been a comfort to her, each chapter a draught of Lethe in her wilderness of pain. She hardly knew how she could have produced it with that continual ache at the heart of her; and now it lived, she was possessed by a physical and mental exhaustion that made her numb to the usually keen delight of successful achievements. Amongst the congratulatory letters she received, there was one from Pennant.

"You have written a book that will make every one think who *can* think," he wrote, "and I am not surprised, because I always knew your power. I suppose you feel now that life has nothing further to offer you. Accept my felicitations, and every wish for your happiness. No doubt you were right in your decision, from your point of view, as events seem to have justified it."

She laid her head down upon the paper. She would have given worlds for tears, but there were none to come. They were all dried up in the fever of her regret.

"Yes, life has nothing further to offer me," she thought; "it offered me happiness once, and I kicked it away like a petulant child. Now there is nothing left, no, not even the satisfaction of knowing I have made something myself, alone and unaided. It is part his, as everything of mine is part his. I see it now too late. His fertilizing individuality made me great where I am great, and had I never known him 'The Higher Light' could never have been written. It is born of my love and trouble and despair, and its whole meaning is impregnate with him—whom, with all my body and self, I have worshipped. I might have done something without him, but not *that*, nor anything that I have done *with* him. Why did I let my cursed pride consume my instinct, when a woman's instincts are her best protectors. Fool! Fool! Fool!" She was ready to rave and tear her hair;

that was because she had grown too strong to weep, and too weak to fight despair.

Of course she might have married the other man; there are always plenty of other men in the world. She nearly did so.

It was when she returned home from a drive one day that the temptation fell upon her. She had seen Pennant riding with a pretty girl, in whom he seemed interested.

There was a letter awaiting her from a man whose wedding ring meant position and luxury to the end of her days.

The terrible surge of longing to be in that pretty girl's place, by the side of Pennant, suggested the thought that any love would be better than no love at all.

So she wrote a letter saying "Yes."

But it never was sent.

Only one thing aroused her to a passionate hope again—a critique—in which the writer stated that Pennant was "played out."

"If he should want me as much as I want him," she thought. But she could not move hand or foot.

Then she heard he was going to be married. She writhed, and began to see she was growing haggard.

"He will marry a beautiful young girl, and thank his stars he was never tied to me," she groaned over and over to herself.

But she wrote to congratulate him.

He sent back a formal little note of thanks.

He was indeed a fortunate man, he said, in the high noon of life, to win the affection of so sweet and fresh a girl, and he hoped he might be able to make her happy.

"Make her happy, God!" cried Judith within. "Why were women made like this, from Eve ever since, never to know Eden's joy till it is lost to them for ever—to risk it, and rue it right into hell!"

But this marriage did not come off, for Michael Pennant fell very dangerously ill a month before the wedding day, which had been fixed.

As soon as he knew he was dying, he sent for Judith. She fell on her knees beside him. "It

was all a mistake, wasn't it?" he said, laying his hand on her hair.

But she could not speak.

"Tell me one thing. Have you been content?" he asked.

Then she raised her wet face and spoke.

"Content! Can you ask me? I have been a fool—a fool! and you?"

"I believe I, too, was a fool to let you go—and yet—if you had not been happy with me—"

"If not with you, love not in earth or heaven."

"Then why did you not come back and say so?"

"I could not—being a woman. Had you asked me again—but you never loved me or you would—"

"No. I could never have loved you, I suppose. But then I never loved any one else, and when I lost you I lost everything, it seemed."

"Yet you would not ask me to come back?"

"Do you think only women are privileged to make mistakes, Judith?"

The sound of her name in his voice again stopped her speech with a spasm.

"It is a good thing I am going to die," he went on.

"Ah—why?" she breathed.

"I was about to marry that happy child, and I can't act, never could."

"You love her!" cried Judith passionately.

He turned his eyes full into hers with a smile—a serious smile.

"Do you think so?" he said.

For a minute neither seemed to breathe. Then he continued:—

"I can't bear any more. I am going to flicker out soon, so leave me."

"Let me stay and nurse you," she cried eagerly.

"No, don't. I should want to live, and life is too droll a farce for me to take part in it any more—as I said—I am no actor—good-bye—wife."

She bent over him, . . . then went out, rigid.

* * * *

And the other woman did not get him.

* * * *

So the story has a happy ending after all!







PALMY

"The mind and visage oft are things apart,
A smiling face oft masks a breaking heart."



WAGSTAFF (to little Smallpage) : "I suppose you were brought up on condensed milk."



SALVATION SAL (to village toper) : "If thou doesn't mend thy ways, Ben Bosky, thou'll go to a place where there's nowt but weepin' and wailin' and nashin' of teeth."

BEN B. : "I shan't have to do any nashin', 'cos I've nowt ter nash."

A ROMANCE OF THE PAVEMENT.

By A. ADAMS MARTIN.

HE was an artist of the pavements, and she was a little flower girl.

He had been a cripple from his birth ; and Nature, casting about her, as she does occasionally, for some means of making it up to him, gave him an extra allowance of soul. It was a poor, dim, untutored thing, that soul of his, but it brought with it the wondrous dower of dreams, and these created for him a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelt Beauty.

So he became an artist, and the pavements provided him with studio and canvas, as they had hitherto done with bed and board, and on their plane surfaces he executed marvellous compositions in coloured chalks after the manner of his kind. That these were rather better than the average matters neither here nor there. Who cares to search on paving-stones for germs of the artistic spirit, when he can pay his shilling respectably and study whole galleries of its Over Soul ?

For the rest he daubed in red, and blue, and green, and surrounded his landscapes and seascapes with fantastic borders of scroll work and wreathed imagery, and was happy. Why not ? The sun shone very often, and people gave him pence occasionally—purchasing thus cheaply a glow of virtuous charity. Then he had his dreams ; and, presently, *she* came to crown them. Liz was very young then, and very pretty ; in a fuzzy-haired, pink-and-white, childish way. I have heard her called a “magnificent creature”—but that was later.

She was a new arrival at the corner by the street lamp where the flower baskets always stood, having come to take the place of a frowzy female in a red shawl, much given to gin and incoherent language. I believe that she was

Liz's aunt ; but of her subsequent history it matters not. She made way for Liz, and the flower trade increased very materially by the transfer.

One morning, on her way to business, she stopped before Jim the cripple, and stared with round-eyed wonder and delight at his work. “Lord ! ain’t it natur’l ! ‘Owever can you do it ?” she exclaimed admiringly.

People had given him money ; but no one had ever given him *this* before, and he felt suddenly that he had been waiting all his life for just *this*. His poor dumb soul rose up to meet her, and prostrated itself before her in boundless gratitude. When she went away she smiled, and nodded, and he smiled too ; for she had left her image behind with him, and it was better than a dream.

He tried to draw her as she had looked standing there, holding her roses and lilies ; but no materials seemed pure enough to embody his conception. *She was so beautiful !* When she smiled, it seemed to him as if a bit of the far-off blue sky had come down close to him in her eyes.

After that he used to look out for her daily ; the difference between one day and another, between rain, and shine, and heat, and cold, being just this —when Liz noticed him and when she did not.

She generally had a smile or a word for him, though ; and sometimes, when not too busy, she would lay down her basket on the kerbstone, and sit by his side there, to chatter and watch him work. She admired his skill prodigiously, and sometimes selected the subjects ; but her taste inclined towards battle pieces, with a great many soldiers, or pictures of grand ladies dancing. Sometimes she would get up and caper about the pavement to show him how these latter ought to look, and Jim would follow her lithe movements

with dumb admiration. Those were his golden days, and they lasted for a whole summer, and more.

Then came the fall of the leaf, and Liz's basket filled with shaded chrysanthemums and violets. It was colder, of course, for she wrapped herself in an old shawl, and it rained very often, because Liz's hat and plume grew more damp and sodden daily. She used to grumble about her bad luck, and the exactions of a certain "old un" at home, who needed many chrysanthemums to keep him in drink. It was the "winter of her discontent," and therefore he knew it was winter now. *Liz* was his calendar, you see.

One afternoon she paused before him with radiant face. "I've 'ad a regler stroke of luck, Jim ; look 'ere !"

She opened her clenched hand warily, and displayed a shining gold piece.

"It wor given me by a swell as bought a button-'ole orf me, 'cos I wor sich a pritty gal, ee sed. An' ee give me this, thinkin' it wor a bloomin' bob ! Them swells never looks at wot they gives, an' they kerries it loose : suverings an' all together."

Liz laughed. Her sense of ethics was a shady one.

"I'm orf," she continued. "I'm goin' to 'ave a regler spree for once, an' fust I'll 'ave a jolly good spread ; only I'm not sure wot. There's tripe an' inyins, an' 'ot mutting pies. Lor! won't it be prime!" and she gleefully rubbed her hands. "An 'ole bloomin' suvering to spend myself !"

He had forgotten that he was hungry—he was always hungry—but at the enumeration of these dainties he must have looked wistful, for the girl cried suddenly,—

"Look 'ere, Jim ! You're to come too. Sich luck don't come orfen : an' I'll stand treat. Maybe we'll go to the theater arterwards, and I'll make you a button-'ole as good as any swell's there."

She sat down there and then to arrange one, and put it in his coat : a rosebud and a bit of fern—the best in her basket. After that they enjoyed all the distinction of having their boots blacked by a professional ; and feeling very much elevated in the social scale thereby, Liz gave herself airs over

her dinner, and affected to find fault with the plum duff which followed their tripe and onions, soundly rating the *restaurant* servitor, also, for giving her beer without an "ead on it."

To Jim it was all nectar and ambrosia, for was he not with *her*? She reproached him for not eating more, and heaped his plate and refilled his glass with lavish hand. Good food and drink, however, did not seem to loosen Jim's tongue as they did hers, and she began to feel slightly impatient with his lack of what she termed "sperrit." Liz wanted to be amused as well as fed, and his dumb adoration was in her opinion "stoopid." He knew nothing about theatres, either, and she was obliged to consult the waiter, whose tastes and hers seemed to run in similar grooves. Something with lots of music and dancing,—that was what she stipulated for, and her adviser recommended a popular burlesque which was then running.

But first Liz insisted on going to purchase some cheap finery, although much exercised in mind as to how to hide it from the "old un," whose talent for turning solids of marketable value into fluids was swift and certain in its working. She concluded that it would be best for Jim to keep her hat, and she could manage the shawl ; and these two indispensable additions to her costume were accordingly purchased, along with a pair of white cotton gloves. Liz had no "size" in gloves then.

They got front seats in the pit, and Liz's enjoyment reached its height. I doubt if she saw or thought of anything but the stage—drinking in the glamour of it all with parted lips and staring eyes. She was in fairy land, and forgot Jim altogether ; only he was in fairy land too—but a different fairy land from hers. In it he saw but one thing—*Liz*—Liz with her flushed cheeks and shining eyes, arrayed in all the splendour of the new shawl and hat : a hat whose decoration of cheap, gaudy flowers was as magnificent in his eyes as it had been in hers.

"Aven't we 'ad a jolly good spree !" she said, with a sigh, when it was all over. "Music an' dancin' an' singin', an' all warmth an' colours ! O Lord ! Jim, wasn't it prime ! An' *did* you see the swell gals' dresses ? "

"No," he answered simply; "I saw nothing but you."

Liz laughed at him; and then she sighed again.

"I'd like to 'ave it all over ag'in to-morrer. I've got a dorg's life, I 'ave, an' I'm regler sick of it; but I won't git another bloomin' suvering in a 'urry."

They were in the crush at the entrance, when suddenly Liz caught the arm of her escort, whispering with excited eyes,—

"Look, Jim! there's the swell as bought the button'-ole!"

He never quite recollects *how* it all happened then; only that a man, with bold admiration in his eyes and voice, had accosted Liz, and he, in his anger, had tried to push him back,—had even, he thought, *struck* him,—but in his weakness and impotency had been hustled aside, a strong arm flinging him off as one might a snapping cur.

Then the surging crowd hemmed him in; and when making a frantic effort to reach Liz again, he was swept off his feet, and only rescued by the strong arm of a policeman from going under the wheels of a carriage.

He was stunned by the fall, and torn and bruised and bleeding; but he did not think of these things. He could only remember that he had lost *her*—that he had failed in his duty to her. She was gone, and nothing remained of his paradise but a memory saddened by his own shame and sorrow, and a withered rosebud, smirched with the mud of the street.

He limped painfully away into the darkness which had swallowed her up, and, oh! *how* dark it felt!

"But I will see her again to-morrow," he whispered, "and she will smile and forgive me"; and that thought seemed to bring the stars out.

But when to-morrow came it did not bring Liz.

He watched all day with wearying eyes, wondering dimly what new calamity had happened. Had the "old un" taken away her finery and made her unhappy; or—and he shuddered—perhaps beaten her, for the money spent? All Liz's misfortunes seemed to lie at his door, and he so powerless to help her. She had been so pleased and happy over her new clothes, and it was through him she had lost them. Then he tried to calculate what it would cost to restore them, and began to hoard his pennies with miserly eagerness. They were all to be for Liz when she came back—to-morrow. So he whispered to himself the next day, and the next, and the next—only to-morrow seemed so long in coming.

Many morrows came and went, but never the one for which he waited so confidently. Many pence were added to the little store which was to buy Liz's shawl and hat. He seemed to need so few of them himself.

One afternoon he was preparing to close his exhibition at an earlier hour than usual. He felt strangely weak and giddy, and the crowd who passed and repassed became more and more blurred in outline. He did not notice the approach of a carriage in which sat a woman elaborately attired: a woman with brilliant cheeks and eyes, wearing a hat wreathed with pink roses on her bright yellow hair. He noticed *that*, for he was vaguely thinking that Liz's hat should have pink roses also, when the ring of a coin—a golden coin—on the pavement at his feet roused him from his dreaming, and set his heart throbbing heavily. His luck had come—and Liz must come now to share it.

He raised his eyes to the vision of beauty in the carriage, with wonder and gratitude—

And then he knew that to-morrow would *never* come.



A TURKISH NOBLE.
(Sketched from Life.)



"I 'ear as you 'ad a fight with Bob Smith."

"Yes."

"What was it all about?"

"Well, 'e said as my 'sister was cross-eyed."

"Why, you 'avent got a sister."

"No; but it was the principle of the thing I went for."

A Merry
Xmas.



FOLKART

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